Byzantium

330–1453

Edited by Robin Cormack and Maria Vassilaki

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS

Committees 7

Patron's Foreword 8

Prime Ministers' Forewords 11

President's Foreword 12

Director's Foreword 15

Supporters' Prefaces 16

Acknowledgements 17

Chronology 18
ROBIN CORMACK

Maps 20

Essays

I
A Historical Introduction 25
CYRIL MANGO

II
The Art of Byzantium: 330–1453 35
ROBIN CORMACK AND MARIA VASSILAKI

Catalogue plates

1
The Beginnings of Christian Art 45
THOMAS F. MATHEWS

2
From Constantine to Iconoclasm 65
HENRY MAGUIRE

3
At Court 111
ANTHONY CUTLER

4
At Home
Part 1: Ceramics of Everyday Life 141
DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

At Home:
Part 2: Metalwork of Everyday Life 151
MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

At Home:
Part 3: Jewellery and Adornment 163
AIMILIA YEROULANOU

5
At Church 195
LIZ JAMES

6
Icons 249
NANO CHATZIDAKIS

7
Byzantium and the West 275
MICHELE BACCI

8
Beyond Byzantium 307
ANTONY EASTMOND

9
The Monastery of
St Catherine at Sinai 357
MARIA VASSILAKI AND
ROBIN CORMACK

Catalogue entries 377

Endnotes 463

Glossary 468
ROBIN CORMACK

Bibliography 470

Lenders to the Exhibition 489

Photographic Acknowledgements 490

Index 491

BENAKI MUSEUM

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Page 9: detail of cat.225
Page 10: detail of cat.238
Page 13: detail of cat.304
Page 14: detail of cat.271.4
Page 376 and endpapers: detail of cat.313
Pages 466–7: detail of cat.299

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CLARENCE HOUSE

The term Byzantine has come to mean something tortuous – a rigidly hierarchic or labyrinthine process – and these negative connotations have, unjustly, tarnished an extraordinary culture that flourished over a thousand year period at a time of great uncertainty and change. The continuity provided by Byzantium and its empire was felt across a great expanse of the world through Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia and the Middle East and its influence in the shape of religious art and architecture has remained constant since Constantinople, the fabled capital city of the Empire, was founded in 330 as the New Rome. It was rightly seen as one of the great cities of history, with its beautiful domed churches, gracious palaces and wide colonnaded streets running through parks and cultivated gardens.

Drawing on the traditions of the ancient world, a new art developed to serve the official state religion of Christianity making it the first great Christian Empire; wealth accumulated through its territories and tax regimes and an active trade network led to a flourishing of the arts as churches and monasteries were built and handsomely decorated to advance the belief. *"Byzantium 330-1453"* gives us the first opportunity since 1958 to witness this great civilization in its entirety, from its foundation by the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great, to its ultimate demise in 1453 at the hands of the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmet the Conqueror, when Constantinople finally fell. The journey is a long and fascinating one which guides us over a thousand year period, but which, remarkably, still continues to exist in the Orthodox Holy Monasteries of St Catherine at Sinai, Mount Athos, Patmos and many others which continue to practice as they have done for nearly two millennia and, in so doing, reveal a world that has in many ways been lost to us.

As the Patron of the exhibition, I am delighted to commend it to you.

Prime Ministers' Forewords

The last great exhibition of Byzantine art and culture to take place in Britain was exactly fifty years ago, when 'Masterpieces of Byzantine Art' was held at the Edinburgh Festival before being transferred to the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1958. Since that time no British exhibition has done justice to the full extent of the extraordinary influences of Byzantium, so I am delighted to see the Royal Academy of Arts, in collaboration with the Benaki Museum in Athens, mounting a major exhibition that explores this remarkable culture.

The impact of Byzantium extended from the Balkans into central Europe and Russia, through Anatolia into Syria, Egypt and beyond, and its influence can still be felt across the Orthodox world today – particularly in the monasteries, where the traditions of the church, maintained for over 1,600 years, allow us a rare glimpse of the past.

This exhibition contains some fascinating new discoveries and, through objects brought together from collections across the world, tells the story of how Constantine the Great created the new city of Constantinople in his name. Flowering under his rule, Constantinople went on to become one of the greatest cities of the modern world – a centre for intercontinental communication and trade and a focus for religious, political and cultural activity.

In today's new global age, 'Byzantium 330–1453' stands as a timely reminder of our links with the peoples and the nations of the past. I hope that you enjoy the exhibition.

GORDON BROWN
Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

From the earliest years of the modern age, Byzantium was often given only a minor role, when the story was told of Europe, as an historic example of the risks inherent in mixing East and West. Thus, although the European idea was acknowledged as having its roots in classical Greece, the official view of European history paradoxically tended to overlook the historic continuity of that civilisation.

Nowadays, the ideological reasons for this unfair omission have mostly disappeared. After centuries of division and conflict, Eastern and Western Europe can look forward to a common, promising future within the framework of the European Union and celebrate their shared cultural roots. As Europeans seek to define what our continent stands for, the study of Byzantium is becoming of paramount importance. Its heritage, shared not only by Europeans, but also by citizens of nations in the three different continents over which it once extended, can help us foster the common values that bring us together and understand the causes and the nature of our differences.

I am convinced that this exhibition, organised by the Royal Academy of Arts with the collaboration of the Benaki Museum, will make a significant contribution to this effort. I have no doubt that all Greeks will welcome initiatives such as the 'Byzantium 330–1453' exhibition, which besides promoting discussion of Byzantium and everything it represents, will also help this growing knowledge to emerge as a useful tool for understanding history and planning our European and Mediterranean future.

KOSTAS KARAMANLIS
Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic

President's Foreword

The history of Byzantium is extraordinarily rich. At the height of its power, Constantinople ruled over an empire that extended throughout much of southern Europe, the Balkans, Anatolia and the Middle East. That this empire lasted over a thousand years is an astonishing achievement, given contemporary instability and change. But the journey was never easy. Periods of expansion and contraction reveal how the fortunes of Constantinople waxed and waned, including the city's unexpected occupation by western forces between 1204 and 1261, and the long siege by Ottoman forces that culminated in the capture of Constantinople by Mehmet II. One of the Royal Academy's most recent and successful exhibitions, 'Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600–1600', picked up the story of Ottoman Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) in 1453, as the sun set on Byzantium, and so it is fitting now to take up the story in 330, at the beginning of that magnificent civilisation.

'Byzantium 330–1453' is one of the most ambitious and complex exhibitions ever to have been mounted by the Royal Academy. Although the exhibition will only be shown in London, the Royal Academy has collaborated with the Benaki Museum, Athens, in order to make it possible. We would like to acknowledge the important support of its Director, Professor Angelos Delivorrias, and the President of its Board of Trustees, Mrs Aimilia Yeroulanou, throughout this process. We would also like to thank Their Excellencies Vassilis Pispinis, Greek Ambassador in London, and Yigit Alpogan, Turkish Ambassador in London, for their enthusiastic backing. The exhibition has been curated with great skill by Robin Cormack, Emeritus Professor of History of Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, and Maria Vassilaki, Associate Professor of the History of Byzantine Art at the University of Thessaly and Scientific Advisor at the Benaki Museum, in conjunction with Dr Adrian Locke, Acting Director of Exhibitions at the Royal Academy. We acknowledge with gratitude the sage advice of members of the Organising Committee (listed on page 7), who met once at the Royal Academy and again at the Benaki Museum in the exhibition's initial stages, and we are also most grateful to countless colleagues in many countries who facilitated the process of drawing together the loans. Despite numerous complications, the complex logistical aspects of the exhibition have been expertly handled by Jane Knowles, Exhibition Organiser. The making of this catalogue, with nearly 100 contributors, has presented similar challenges to Peter Sawbridge, Managing Editor, and Rosalind Neely.

The Royal Academy is extremely grateful for the generous financial support of the J.F.Costopoulos Foundation, the A.G. Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, without whose help this exhibition would not have been possible. We would also like to thank our exhibition travel partner, Cox & Kings, and The Hellenic Foundation, Dean Menegas and the St Catherine Foundation for additional support.

SIR NICHOLAS GRIMSHAW CBE
President, Royal Academy of Arts

Director's Foreword

The Benaki Museum's ties with Great Britain are both old and strong. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London was, in a way, the model for the Benaki Museum at its foundation in 1930. Since then, the kinship between the two organisations has been reflected in continuous communication over scholarly issues, as well as two acclaimed exhibitions in 2006. A comparable spirit of amity animated the Benaki Museum's collaboration with the Hayward Gallery and the Science Museum in 1976, and more recently with the National Gallery and the British Council, in an ever-widening cycle of cultural events.

The Benaki Museum and the Royal Academy of Arts first came into contact with each other in 1987, on the occasion of the exhibition 'From Byzantium to El Greco'. Almost two decades later the opportunity arose for a second and more profound encounter between the two institutions, a sign of the ripening awareness of the need to pay off at least part of the debt that Europe owes to Byzantine civilization. Predictably, this jointly co-ordinated effort, the product of a partnership that will doubtless continue in the future in other domains and for other reasons, has not escaped the obstacles that every important venture must confront. Nevertheless, despite the inevitable difficulties, 'Byzantium 330–1453' has succeeded in securing the wholehearted support of friends from the ecclesiastical, museum and academic worlds of Europe and America.

The Benaki Museum expresses its immense gratitude to all those who have shouldered the burden of resolving the many theoretical and practical problems involved in the various stages of preparing the exhibition. Their names are recorded with due credit in the previous pages, where the decisively important sponsorship of the J.F.Costopoulous, the A.G.Leventis and the S.S.Niarchos Foundations is also extolled. Lastly, although neither the Community of the Holy Monasteries of Mount Athos nor the Holy Monastery of St John the Theologian of Patmos is included in these pages, this in no way diminishes the fact that the exhibition at the Royal Academy of Arts is as much in honour of Orthodoxy as it is of Greece.

ANGELOS DELIVORRIAS
Director, Benaki Museum, Athens

Supporters' Prefaces

The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, the A. G. Leventis Foundation and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation are very proud to support the exhibition 'Byzantium 330–1453'. The three Foundations are committed to promoting and preserving Hellenic culture and heritage in Greece and abroad.

The J. F. Costopoulos Foundation, a non-profit charitable institution, was founded in 1979 on the occasion of the centenary of Credit Bank, in memory of its founder John F. Costopoulos, by its then Chairman, the late Spyros Costopoulos and his wife Eurydice. The main purpose of establishment and operation of the Foundation is to promote Greek culture in all aspects both in Greece and abroad through the constant support of initiatives associated with education, research, public welfare and the arts. More specifically, the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation supports activities related to the preservation and dissemination of the ancient Greek and Byzantine cultural heritages. Furthermore, its noteworthy presence in the field of art, and more particularly of modern and contemporary art, organising and supporting important exhibitions, is strongly manifested every year. In pursuit of its aims the J.F. Costopoulos Foundation often collaborates with other prominent foundations in projects of common interest.

The A. G. Leventis Foundation was also established in 1979, to fulfil the wishes of the late Anastasios Leventis. Following his directions, the Foundation's activities were based on three principles: culture, education, philanthropy; a fourth was later added to these, the environment. In Cyprus, Greece and wider south-eastern Europe, the Foundation's main emphasis has been on the restoration of a number of monuments of various periods and on support for education and culture. Elsewhere in Europe, and further afield, there has again been a concentration on education, with a particular focus on the communities of the Greek diaspora. An international programme of support for Greek studies has been developed over the years in parallel with efforts to study and enhance the presentation of Cypriot antiquities in museums around the world. The Foundation has active international programmes on environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture, with emphasis on developing countries.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is an international philanthropic organisation that supports charitable activities in four primary areas: the arts and culture, education, health and medicine, and social welfare. The Foundation's Board of Directors award grants to not-for-profit organisations throughout the world, and since the Foundation's inception in 1996 have provided more than 1,560 grants to organisations in 85 nations around the world. In addition, the Foundation maintains a major commitment to supporting programmes in Greece through the guidance of a locally based advisory committee. The Foundation seeks to provide contributions that have the potential to add value in a significant way. Within each programme category, the Foundation supports initiatives that feature strong leadership and sound management and that can demonstrate a tangible impact over time. The Foundation hopes to foster exchange and collaboration among recipient institutions by supporting a broad range of organisations across its target programme areas. It places particular emphasis on endeavours that address education, social welfare and health issues for underserved populations, with special attention given to programmes for children and the elderly. Selectively, the Foundation also seeks to support programmes within and outside Greece that promote, maintain and preserve Greek heritage and culture.

Acknowledgements

The curators of the exhibition and the members of the Honorary and Organising Committees would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following individuals during the making of this exhibition and its catalogue:

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Chronology

ROBIN CORMACK

324
Constantine I (306–37) becomes sole emperor of the Roman Empire, defeating Licinius at the Battle of Chrysopolis and announcing the foundation of Constantinople on the site of Byzantium on the Bosporos

325
First Ecumenical Church Council at Nicaea proclaims the divinity of Christ

330
11 May: Constantinople dedicated

361–63
Emperor Julian reinstates paganism

392
Theodosios I bans pagan cults

402
Ravenna developed as a capital

410
Rome sacked by Alaric the Visigoth

429–31
Vandal conquest of Africa

431
Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus proclaims Mary as Mother of God

432–40
Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome

451
Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon establishes Orthodox doctrine on the human and divine nature of Christ

455
Rome sacked by Vandals

476
Last Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus, deposed by Odovar the Ostrogoth

525
Antioch destroyed by earthquake

529
Philosophy schools at Athens closed
Codification of Roman law

532–37
First Church of St Sophia (Holy Wisdom) burnt in riots and rebuilt for Justinian I (527–65) by architects Isidoros of Miletos and Anthemios of Tralles

533–54
Reconquest of Africa, Sicily and Italy

537
St Sophia dedicated on Christmas Day

548
Death of Empress Theodora

550–65
Building of the Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

558
First dome of St Sophia collapses and is rebuilt to a new design

568
Italy invaded by Lombards

***c.*570**
Birth of Mohammed, prophet of Islam

586
Slavs and Avars invade Balkans

590–604
Gregory the Great becomes Pope in Rome

***c.*600**
John Klimakos (*c.*579–650), Abbot of Sinai, writes the *Heavenly Ladder*, one of the most popular books in Byzantium, especially for monks

602–28
War with Persia; Greece and the Balkans are invaded by Avars and Slavs

610
Conversion of the Pantheon at Rome into a church

614
Jerusalem captured by the Persians

622
Emigration (Hegira) of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina on 16 July marks beginning of Muslim era

626
Constantinople attacked by the Avars

629
Herakleios (610–41) recovers the True Cross from Persia

632
Death of Mohammed

634–42
Arab conquest of Syria, Palestine and Egypt

638
Jerusalem falls to Arabs under Caliph Omar I

673–78
First Arab attack on Constantinople

***c.*675–753/54**
John of Damascus, iconophile theologian

685–95
Gold coins of Justinian II with the face of Christ on the obverse

697/98
Carthage, last Byzantine stronghold in Africa, falls to Arabs

705–07
Pope John VII decorates Santa Maria Antiqua and an oratory in St Peter's in Rome

717–18
Arab siege of Constantinople

***c.*730–87**
First period of Byzantine iconoclasm

732
Charles Martel victorious over Arabs at Poitiers

751
Ravenna falls to Lombards; end of the Byzantine Exarchate

754
Council of Hieria declares iconoclasm as Orthodox doctrine

762
Baghdad founded by Caliph el Mansur

787
Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicaea condemns opposition to icons as heresy

797–802
Irene empress of Byzantium

800
Charlemagne crowned emperor of the Romans by Pope Leo III

811
Byzantine army crushed by Bulgarians

815–43
Second period of iconoclasm

820
Birth of Photios (d.893); Patriarch of Constantinople, 858–67 and 877–86

826
Crete falls to Arabs

827–78
Sicily falls to Arabs

837–43
John VII Grammatikos (John the Grammarian) Patriarch of Constantinople

843
Triumph of Orthodoxy declared and iconoclasm condemned as heresy

843–47
Methodios Patriarch of Constantinople

858–67
Photios' first period as Patriarch

860
First Russian attack on Constantinople

863
Victory over Arabs; Byzantine offensive in the East begins

873–74
Dedication of the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou (see cat.183)

875–902
Byzantine reconquests in Italy and Sicily

877–86
Photios' second period as Patriarch

886–912
Leo VI emperor

945–59
Sole rule of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos

957
Russian Princess Olga received at imperial court

961
Reconquest of Crete from Arabs

962
First monastery on Mount Athos founded by St Athanasios as the Great Laura

976–1025
Empire extended under Basil II

988
Russian conversion to Orthodox Christianity

1017
Basil II annexed Bulgarian kingdom

1018–96/97
Michael Psellos, philosopher, historian, courtier and monk

1037–46
St Sophia at Kiev

1042–55
Foundation of Nea Moni on Chios by Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos

1054
Schism declared between Orthodox Church and Roman Church

1061
Norman conquest of Sicily

1064
San Marco in Venice rebuilt and decorated with Byzantine mosaics

1066
Theodore Psalter (cat.51) produced at the Monastery of St John Stoudios in Constantinople

1067
Turks take Caesarea in Asia Minor

1071
Seljuk Turks defeat Byzantines at Battle of Manzikert. Bari taken by Normans and Byzantium loses southern Italy

1078–1375
Armenian kingdom of Cilicia

1087
Doors for Atrani Cathedral produced (cat.265)

1096–99
First Crusade

1099
Jerusalem becomes a Latin kingdom

1108
Church of St Michael at Kiev built

1118–43
John II Komnenos builds the imperial Monastery of Christ Pantokrator at Constantinople

1130
Icon of Virgin and Child sent from Constantinople to Kiev; as the icon of Vladimir, this later becomes the protecting icon of Moscow

1147
First reference to city of Moscow

1147–49
Second Crusade

1149
Corfu retaken by Byzantium from Normans

1171
Venetians in empire arrested and properties confiscated

1180
Serbian empire established by Stephen Nemanja

1182
Latins massacred in Constantinople

1185
Normans sack Thessaloniki

1186
Second Bulgarian empire

1187
Jerusalem is captured from Crusaders by Saladin

1189–92
Third Crusade.

1191–1489
Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus

1202–04
Fourth Crusade

1204
12 April: Sack of Constantinople by armies of the Fourth Crusade. Frankish Duchy of Athens is established. Boniface of Montferrat sells Crete to Venetians for 1,000 marks

1204–61
Latin Empire of Constantinople

1204–1340
Despotate of Epirus

1204–1461
Empire of Trebizond

1211–1669
Venetian period in Crete

1240
Mongols take Kiev

1260
Decoration of Cathedral of Sopoćani

1261
Recapture of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos

1274
Council of Lyons reunites the churches

1282
Church Union of Council of Lyons repealed

1282–1328
Andronikos II Palaiologos emperor

1288–1326
Osman, founder of Ottoman dynasty

1291
Fall of Crusader kingdom based at Acre

1304
Ephesus falls to the Ottomans

1311–88
Catalan domination of Athens

1312–14
Church of Holy Apostles in Thessaloniki

1316–21
Decoration of the Chora Monastery of Christ at Constantinople by Theodore Metochites

1329
Turks capture Nicaea and take control of Asia Minor

1348–1460
Mistra becomes seat of the Despots of the Morea

1354
Turks cross into Europe

1355–56
Gospels of Tsar Ivan Alexander produced at Turnovo

1359
Turks at walls of Constantinople

1373
Theophanes the Greek paints the Church of the Transfiguration at Novgorod

1376
Ottoman capital established at Adrianople

1389
Serbian empire falls to the Turks at the Battle of Kossovo

1393
Turks occupy Bulgarian Empire

1397
Constantinople attacked by Turks

1399–1402
Manuel II in the West

***c.*1400**
Basilios Bessarion (see cat.253) born at Trebizond (d.Ravenna, 1472); Bishop of Nicaea in 1437; attended Ferrara-Florence Council from 1438 to 1439; made Cardinal of church of Rome in 1439; remained in Italy, giving his library to San Marco at Venice

1402
Turks defeated by Timur (Tamerlane) at Battle of Ankara

1422
Constantinople attacked by Turks

1430
29 March: Ottoman Turks take Thessaloniki

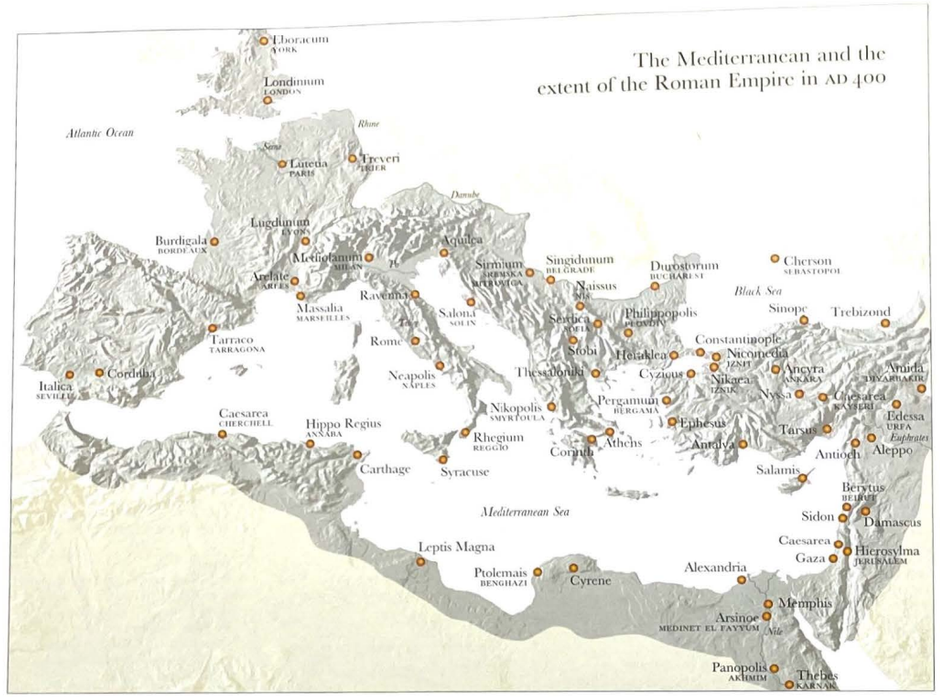
1436
The artist Angelos Akotantos (cats 238, 239) signs his will in Candia, Crete

1438
Church Council at Ferrara

1439
6 July: union of Greek and Latin Churches agreed at Council of Florence

1448–53
Constantine XI Palaiologos, last emperor of Byzantium

1453
29 May: Fall of Constantinople to Ottoman Turks under Mehmet II. Hodegetria icon at Constantinople destroyed


The Mediterranean and the extent of the Roman Empire in AD 400
Eboracum YORK
Londinium LONDON
Atlantic Ocean
Rhine
Seine
Lutetia PARIS
Treveri TRIER
Danube
Lugdunum LYON
Burdigala BORDEAUX
Mediolanum MILAN
Aquileia
Arelate ARLES
Sirmium SREMSKA MITROVICA
Singidunum BELGRADE
Durostorum BUCHAREST
Naissus NIŠ
Chersonesus SEBASTOPOL
Ravenna
Massalia MARSEILLES
Salona SOLIN
Black Sea
Sinope
Trebizond
Philippopolis PLOVDIV
Serdica SOFIA
Tarraco TARRAGONA
Rome
Stobi
Heraklea
Constantinople
Nicomedia IZMIT
Ancyra ANKARA
Amida DIYARBAKIR
Cordoba
Italica SEVILLE
Neapolis NAPLES
Thessalonika
Cyzicus
Nikaea IZNIK
Nyssa
Caesarea KAYSERI
Edessa URFA
Caesarea CHERCHELL
Nikopolis SMYRTOULA
Pergamum BERGAMA
Ephesus
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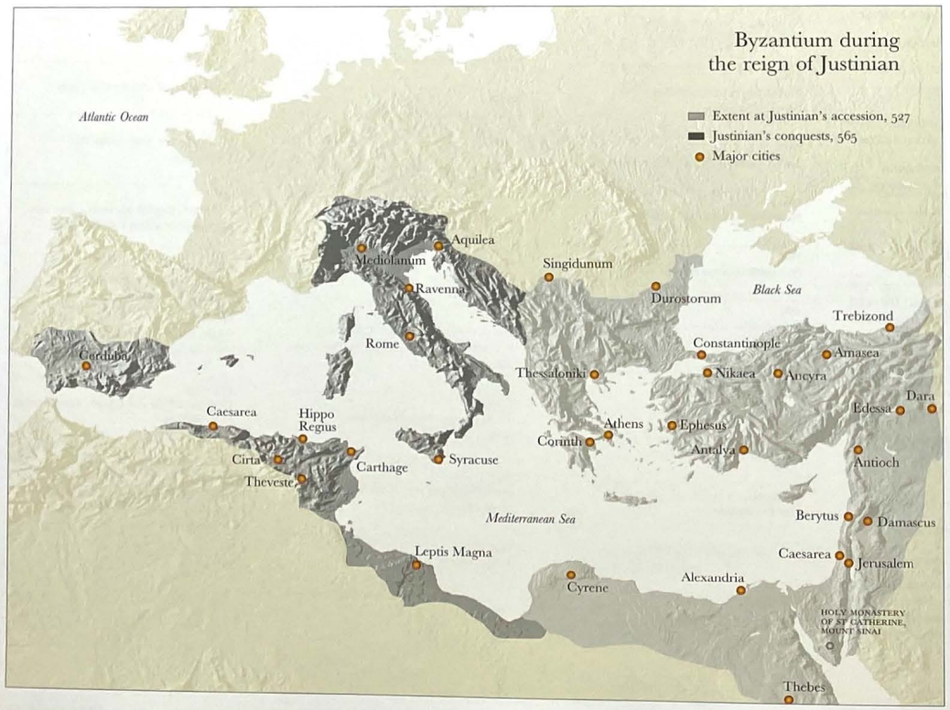
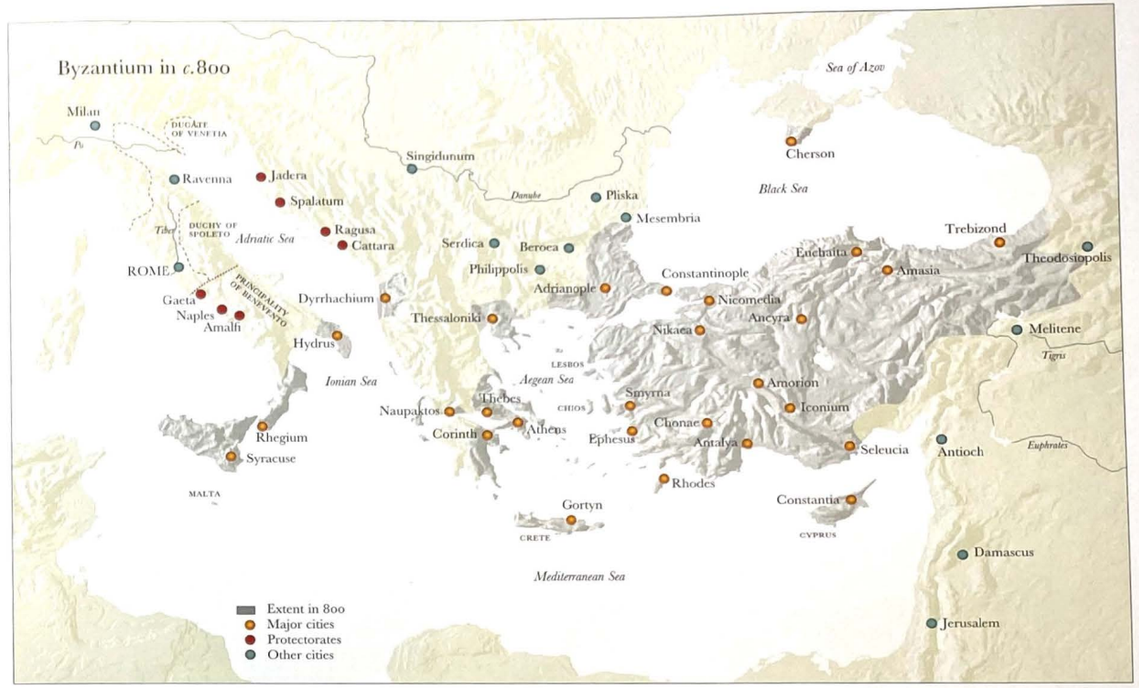
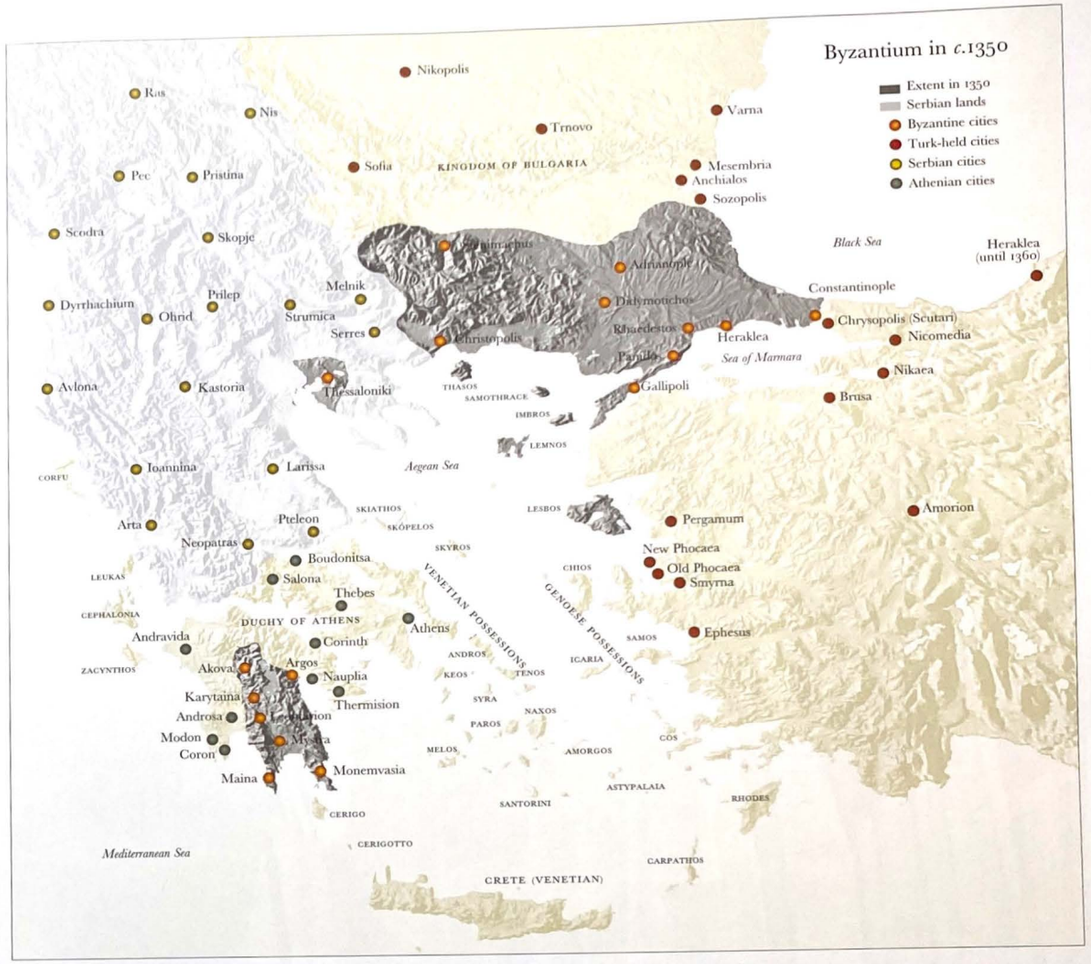
Damascus
Caesarea
Hierosylma JERUSALEM
Leptis Magna
Gaza
Ptolemais BENGHAZI
Cyrene
Alexandria
Memphis
Arsinoe MEDINET EL FAYYUM
Nile
Panopolis AKHMIM
Thebes KARNAK


Byzantium during the reign of Justinian
Extent at Justinian's accession, 527
Justinian's conquests, 565
Major cities
Atlantic Ocean
Aquilea
Mediolanum
Singidunum
Ravenna
Durostorum
Black Sea
Trebizond
Rome
Constantinople
Amasea
Cordoba
Thessalonika
Nikaea
Ancyra
Dara
Edessa
Caesarea
Hippo Regius
Athens
Ephesus
Corinth
Antalya
Cirta
Carthage
Syracuse
Antioch
Theveste
Mediterranean Sea
Berytus
Damascus
Leptis Magna
Caesarea
Jerusalem
Alexandria
Cyrene
HOLY MONASTERY OF ST CATHERINE, MOUNT SINAI
Thebes


Byzantium in c.800
Sea of Azov
Milan
DUCATE OF VENETIA
Po
Singidunum
Cherson
Ravenna
Jadera
Danube
Pliska
Black Sea
Spalatum
Mesembria
Tiber
DUCHY OF SPOLETO
Adriatic Sea
Ragusa
Cattara
Serdica
Beroea
Trebizond
Euchaita
Theodosiopolis
ROME
Philippolis
Amasia
Constantinople
Adrianople
Gaeta
Dyrrhachium
PRINCIPALITY OF BENEVENTO
Nicomedia
Naples
Thessaloniki
Ancyra
Amalfi
Nikaea
Melitene
Hydrus
Tigris
LESBOS
Ionian Sea
Aegean Sea
Smyrna
Amorion
Naupaktos
Thebes
CHIOS
Iconium
Corinth
Athens
Chonae
Ephesus
Antalya
Seleucia
Antioch
Euphrates
Rhegium
Syracuse
Rhodes
MALTA
Gortyn
Constantia
CRETE
CYPRUS
Damascus
Mediterranean Sea
Jerusalem
Extent in 800
Major cities
Protectorates
Other cities

Byzantium in c.1050
Sea of Azov
Theodosia
Venice
Drava
Sava
Po
Cherson
Sirmium
Singidunum
Silistra
Ravenna
Zara
Danube
Black Sea
Ani
Spalato
Nis
Pliska
Varna
Kars
Dvin
Ragusa
Trnovo
Mesembria
Tiber
Adriatic Sea
Pristina
Serdica
Sinope
Amastris
Trebizond
Prizren
Beroea
Rome
Scodra
Sozopolis
Philippopolis
Theodosiopolis
Dyrrhachium
Ohrid
Prilep
Constantinople
Manzikert
Adrianople
Colonia
Naples
Bari
Brindisi
Heraklea
Nicomedia
Prespa
Thessaloniki
Martyropolis
Taranto
Kastoria
Ancyra
Berroe
a
Nikaea
Avlona
Servia
Arabissus
Samosata
Rossano
Larissa
LESBOS
Pergamum
Tigris
Edessa
Mosul
Aegean Sea
Amorion
Germanicea
Thebes
CHIOS
Smyrna
Mopsuestia
Harran
Taormina
Corinth
Athens
Ephesus
Chonae
Adana
Amazarbus
Iconium
SAMOS
Syracuse
Antalya
Seleucia
Antioch
Aleppo
Euphrates
COS
MALTA
Rhodes
Emesa
Tripolis
CRETE
CYPRUS
Beirut
Damascus
Mediterranean Sea
Tiberias
Caesarea
Nazareth
Jerusalem
Extent in 1050
Major cities
Other cities
Conquest of John Tzimiskes

Constantinople in *c.*1200



I

Byzantium: A Historical Introduction

CYRIL MANGO

Fig. 1 ⇐
Mosaic panel with a portrait of the Emperor Justinian, 547
San Vitale, Ravenna

Byzantium is short for the Byzantine empire, which may be defined as the Christian empire ruled from Constantinople. The dates attached to the title of this exhibition are those of the ceremonial inauguration of Constantinople as the New Rome on 11 May 330 and of its capture by the Ottoman Turks on 29 May 1453. On this definition Byzantine history encompasses more than eleven centuries, including what we now call Late Antiquity and the entire Middle Ages.

In addition to being Christian and being governed from Constantinople, Byzantium had one further essential feature, namely its claim to be the direct continuation of the Roman Empire, a claim it maintained to the very end, long after it had lost all semblance of Roman identity. By calling itself Roman it asserted both its primacy among all other nations and its pivotal role in the divine dispensation, for Rome's was the fourth and last kingdom revealed in the book of Daniel, divinely preordained to be the last empire on earth. The translation of the Roman capital from Old Rome to New Rome by the first Christian emperor was not an accident, but part of God's plan, which also determined that the eventual Fall of Constantinople would usher in the end of the world.

Historians today who attach more weight to what they perceive as realities than to myth, no matter how potent, have some trouble in accepting an unchanged Byzantium proceeding in a straight line from the first to the last Constantine. They point out quite correctly that the period from 330 until *c.*640 AD, that is Late Antiquity, was fundamentally different from its medieval sequel. Indeed, some historians prefer to restrict the epithet Byzantine to the medieval empire.

No matter how we label it, the Early Byzantine/Late Roman period still embodied the concept of a single empire, though its eastern and western parts were administered separately after the death of Theodosios I in 395. As the western empire crumbled under barbarian pressure and was eventually abolished, the emperor at Constantinople maintained his theoretical overlordship until Justinian I (527–65) made a determined effort to reconquer Italy, North Africa and even the southern coast of Spain (fig.1). His success was short-lived, except in Africa, whose coast remained in Roman hands until *c.*700. Meanwhile, the eastern half was relatively secure and prosperous. On the international scene its opponents were Persia, the traditional enemy, with whom Constantinople waged an intermittent war, and assorted barbarians – Goths, Huns, Slavs, Avars – who were pushing across the Danubian frontier, but proved on the whole containable. Internally, the eastern empire was a constellation of cities, each with its own rural belt, some going back to Greek Antiquity, many others founded in the Hellenistic period. Constantinople was rapidly growing to become the biggest of them, adorned with pompous public monuments and, increasingly, a multitude of churches, defended by massive fortifications that are still extant today (fig.2). Yet, until well into the sixth century the provincial cities – rather than Constantinople – remained the chief carriers of traditional culture. Indeed, among the literary figures of the time not more than two

or three were natives of Constantinople. While higher schools of philosophy and rhetoric flourished at centres such as Alexandria and Athens, Constantinople could boast only a preparatory school for prospective civil servants.

Fig. 2
Ruins of the walls of Constantinople in present-day Istanbul, 413–47

Long regarded as an age of decadence, Late Antiquity has more recently become a fashionable subject, even a growth industry among professional historians. It was certainly an age of sharp contrasts which saw the last stand of pagan diversity in the face of a triumphant Christian monotheism imposed by a despotic government; an age of heated theological disputes in which the emperor, at first reluctantly, became the supreme arbiter and enforcer; an age that witnessed the phenomenal growth of monasticism, which was a rejection of normal social life and its traditional urban values; an age of what used to be called superstition, but is now called spirituality, entailing as it did a universal belief in demons and magic, the cult of Christian saints and their bodily relics, enthusiastically championed by such eminent and, indeed, cultivated churchmen as St Ambrose in the West and St John Chrysostom in the East. The contradictory tendencies of Late Antiquity are reflected both in its literature and its visual arts.

The end of Late Antiquity in the East came so suddenly and so unexpectedly that it defies explanation. In 602 the Roman army on the Danube frontier mutinied. The reigning emperor Maurice was overthrown and replaced by the brutish Phokas. This gave an excuse to the Persian King Khusro II to invade. Within two decades the whole Roman Near East, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt was in Persian hands. Symbolically the most painful blow was the Fall of Jerusalem and the 'captivity' of the relic of the True Cross. The transfer of the Roman army from Europe to Asia to oppose the Persians opened the Balkans to northern barbarians. Allied to the nomadic Avars, Slavs established themselves all the way down to the Peloponnese. An uprising at Carthage put a new emperor, Herakleios (610–41), on the throne. At first powerless to cope with the crisis, Herakleios embarked on a bold campaign to attack the Persians from the rear by way of the Caucasus. Against all odds he succeeded. The forces of Khusro were crushed in what is now Iraq (628) and the Shah himself killed in an internal plot (fig.3).

Herakleios had barely time to restore the situation and bring back to Jerusalem the True Cross, or rather a replica thereof (630), when a new and unexpected enemy, the Muslim Arabs, appeared on the scene. They quickly conquered all the provinces recovered from the Persians and went on to destroy the Persian kingdom

itself, which collapsed with hardly any opposition. Within a single lifetime the entire map of the Near East had been permanently transformed.

What was now left of the Roman or Byzantine Empire? Essentially, Asia Minor west of the Taurus and Antitaurus ranges, the Aegean islands, a few isolated outposts in the Balkans (like Thessaloniki), southern Crimea, bits of Italy, Sicily and the North African coast – in all, hardly a coherent state. The chances of its survival looked pretty slim, especially as the Arabs made a determined effort to conquer it once and for all. However, their one-year siege of Constantinople (717–18) failed, thus saving eastern Europe from Muslim domination.

Fig. 3
Combat of David and Goliath, largest of a set of nine plates, thought to symbolise the victory of Herakleios over the Persian Empire. Dated by stamps, 613–629/30. Silver, diameter 49.4 cm

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

As we enter the medieval Byzantine period, we find ourselves in a different world, dimly illuminated by a woefully inadequate historical record. The Balkans are now held by a medley of barbarians, mostly Slavs, but also Turkic Bulgarians, who in 681 establish themselves in the country they still inhabit. The centre of the empire's gravity consequently shifts to Asia Minor, itself subjected to yearly Arab incursions and devastation. While Constantinople remains secure behind its impregnable walls, nearly all provincial cities either disappear altogether or, terrain allowing, shrink to a more defensible citadel, as one can still see at sites such as Ephesus, Sardis and Ankyra. Under these conditions a civilised life, of the kind that had existed in Late Antiquity, becomes impossible, and that explains one characteristic of the medieval Byzantine Empire, namely that Constantinople, from being the biggest of many cities, becomes the only true city, now called simply *polis* – not that there was much culture at Constantinople in the second half of the seventh and the eighth centuries. Yet, even under the dire conditions of the time, the centre was able to maintain general taxation, a stable currency and a skeleton civil service. In contrast to the West, such traditions of culture as were preserved owed more to imperial officialdom than to the Church or to monasteries, as witnessed by figures like the Patriarchs Tarasios, Nikephoros and Photios, all of them ex-members of the central bureaucracy.

Emperor Leo III (717–41), who saved Constantinople from the Arabs in 717–18, is unjustly remembered not for that glorious deed, but for having initiated iconoclasm, the ban on the manufacture and worship of images of Christ and the saints. Iconoclasm simmered on for over a century (730–843) and generated on the part of its opponents a vast body of polemical literature, exceeded only by the volume of modern commentary. It started quite simply as a reaction to the all too-evident fact of Muslim success. Why were the godless Arabs uniformly victorious, while the Christians were humiliated to the point of losing even their holy city, Jerusalem? To Leo III the answer was clear: the Christians had sinned by falling into idolatry, expressly condemned by the Second Commandment. The military successes against the Arabs and Bulgars won by both Leo III and his son, Constantine V (741–75), only served to validate their theology (fig.4). Indeed, the military situation got worse when iconoclasm had been reversed by Empress Irene (797–802), only to improve again when the ban on images was reimposed by Leo V (815–20).

It is a mistake to assume that for 100 years the Byzantine public did nothing but squabble over the veneration of icons. Yet the phenomenon of iconoclasm, apart from its impact on the development of religious art, had certain unintended consequences that proved historically more important than the theological issues at stake. First, it created a rift between Constantinople and the papacy, leading the latter to seek the support of the Frankish Kingdom and culminating in Charlemagne's imperial coronation (800), which openly challenged the Byzantine exclusive claim to that title. Second, it called into question the relation between State and Church. According to Byzantine ideology the emperor was the chosen of God, responsible both for the temporal and the spiritual welfare of his subjects. A heretical emperor constituted a scandal. Worse, an emperor who was both a heretic and a persecutor of Christians, as Constantine V allegedly was, could only be compared to a pagan tyrant like Diocletian, to whom no allegiance was owed. In the wake of iconoclastic controversy some churchmen were emboldened to reject imperial authority in matters of faith and morals. A precedent was created, even if the net result amounted to very little: the Patriarch of Constantinople, himself appointed by the emperor, had little scope for independence. If he proved difficult, as in the cases of Photios in the ninth century, Nicholas Mystikos in the tenth, Michael Keroularios in the eleventh, or Arsenios in the thirteenth, he was simply dismissed.

The iconoclastic dispute had not yet quite abated when imperial propagandists launched a movement of 'renovation'. Its origins are obscure. Was it a response to the Carolingian renascence in the West which occurred at the same time, and had broadly similar manifestations? Or were the two entirely independent? Renovation meant erasing the effects of the previous two centuries and returning to the culture of Christian Late Antiquity with its traditions of education, book learning and its insistence on 'correct', that is archaic, language as the only vehicle of polite

Fig. 4
The secret weapon of the Byzantine Empire: Greek Fire, which could liquidate enemy ships. Folio 34*v*, bottom, of the *Madrid Skylitzes*, late twelfth century. Parchment, 35.5 × 27 cm

Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid

literature. Such old books as could be found – philosophical, scientific, historical, literary – were re-copied in a new, more compact script, the so-called minuscule. In the minor arts, too, inspiration was sought in Late Antique models – a phenomenon that art historians have, somewhat improperly, labelled the 'Macedonian Renaissance'. Confined, it seems, to Constantinople, the movement of renovation was spread over several decades, indeed centuries, and had two principal consequences. The first, wholly beneficial, was the preservation of a considerable corpus of texts, both Christian and pagan. Indeed, our knowledge of Ancient Greek literature is to a large extent confined to the texts that were copied in Byzantium in the ninth and following centuries. What was not copied was lost. That is well known to classical philologists, but perhaps not sufficiently appreciated by the public today. The second consequence was of more questionable value. It was the virtual elimination from literature of the Greek vernacular, that is the spoken language. Even such genres as homiletics and saints' lives that were aimed at a wide audience were recast into a semblance of Attic Greek and embellished with all the rhetorical flourishes recommended in textbooks. That is why much of

Fig. 5
The Emperor Basil II receiving the submission of his enemies, folio III*r* of the *Psalter of Basil II*, *c.*1019. Parchment, 39.5 × 30.5 cm

Biblioteca Marciana Venice, cod gr. Z. 17 (=421)

Byzantine literature is impenetrable to modern readers. How far it was understood at the time except by a narrow coterie is less clear.

It was also in the ninth century that Byzantium scored its most notable success, whose consequences are still with us today, namely the conversion to Orthodox Christianity of the southern Slavs (Bulgarians and Serbs), leading eventually to that of the Russians. Conversion entailed the invention of a Slavonic script (for none had existed earlier), first, it seems, the perversely difficult Glagolitic, soon replaced by the simpler Cyrillic, modelled on the contemporary Byzantine capital alphabet, and the creation of a Slavonic literary language based on translations from the Greek of texts essential to worship, predication and edification. Conversion went hand in hand with the spread of Byzantine political ideology, architecture and art. If today the greater part of the Orthodox world lies outside the European Union, that is ultimately due to its Byzantinism imposed in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Conversion, however, did not always lead to amicable relations. The Bulgarians, in particular, proved hostile neighbours who repeatedly threatened the very existence of Constantinople while at the same time maintaining commercial links with the empire. If the Bulgarians were at least a known quantity, the Russian Vikings, who suddenly struck at Constantinople in 860 (and again in 907, 941 and 1043), were more frightening because they were initially unknown and had the ability of invading by sea without prior warning. It was widely believed that they would cause the ultimate destruction of the city.

On the eastern front, however, things were going better thanks in part to the fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate, a dynasty ruling from Baghdad. From 863 onwards, in spite of many reverses, the balance of warfare swung in the empire's favour and by 976 northern Mesopotamia and much of Syria were back in Byzantine hands after more than three centuries of Muslim domination. Crete, captured by the Arabs in 827, had been reconquered and Cyprus reoccupied. This was the epic age of medieval Byzantium, and its heroes were a network of interrelated Anatolian warlords, partly of Armenian descent, two of whom, Nikephoros Phokas and his murderer John Tzimiskes, even ascended the throne – very briefly as it turned out.

The eleventh century proved a pivotal age. At the death of Basil II the 'Bulgar-slayer' (1025) (fig.5), the empire was once again in control of the entire Balkan peninsula. Its economic life had developed thanks to the revival of international trade in the Mediterranean, and a number of provincial towns, like Thebes and Corinth, were becoming important manufacturing centres. At Constantinople one can discern signs of a nascent bourgeoisie. Much to the disgust of traditionalists, tradesmen were admitted into the ruling élite. A new law school was established and philosophy was taught by the polymath Michael Psellos. One can imagine Byzantium progressing to the kind of renascence that the West was experiencing at this very juncture. That did not happen.

The crash came very suddenly in the form of the Seljuk Turks and nomadic Turcomans. Following the Byzantine defeat at Manzikert (1071), the whole of Asia

Minor was overrun by the invaders. Within ten years a Turkish emir was ensconced at Nicaea (present-day Iznik) and another was sitting at Smyrna, building a fleet with which to attack Constantinople. The crisis resulted in a palace coup, which brought to the throne Alexios I (1081–1118), a member of the military clan of the Komnenoi, who were to rule the empire for the next hundred years. Up to this point Byzantium had to look in two directions – the east and the north from where the threats to its security came. It was not cut off from the West, but there was no significant Western interference in Byzantine affairs. That changed shortly before the accession of Alexios I, when the Normans captured the Byzantine outpost of Bari (1071) and went on to lay siege to Dyrrachium (now Dürres) and penetrate deep into Greece. To fight the Normans, Alexios had to call in the help of Venice at the cost of ruinous commercial concessions (1082). The arrival of the First Crusade, in which the Normans had a part (1096), further complicated and embittered relations between the two halves of Christendom, ecclesiastically separated by the schism of 1054. From that point until the end of Byzantium the West was always present, both hated and envied, an enemy and a potential, though unreliable, helper, an exploiter, yet a partner in business.

Starting with a nearly desperate situation, Alexios I strove ceaselessly both by arms and diplomacy to retrieve the fortunes of his empire. In Asia Minor only the western coastlands could be recovered: the interior was written off. Alexios defeated the invasion of the nomadic Pechenegs, successfully resisted the Normans and did his best to manoeuvre the leaders of the First Crusade to his advantage. He did not engage in unrealistic adventures. His policies were followed by his able successor John II (1118–43). The dashing Manuel I (1143–80), however, had loftier ambitions and exhausted his state by repeated campaigns in Serbia, Hungary and Italy, in the hope of regaining the patrimony of Constantine the Great. During the brief reign of the paranoid Andronikos I (1183–85), the last of the Komnenoi, the empire began to fragment. Bulgaria and Serbia broke away, as did Cyprus. In 1185 Thessaloniki was sacked by the Normans. Relentlessly, events were moving towards the suppression of the Byzantine state, repeatedly mooted by Norman kings and German emperors and finally attempted by the Fourth Crusade at the instigation of Venice.

The tragic events surrounding the sacking of Constantinople by Crusaders in 1204, which have recently prompted belated apologies by a repentant West, did not spell the death of Byzantium, but certainly put an end to its role as an international power. The political history of the next two and a half centuries, played out on a petty regional scale, is of such baffling complexity as to defy any attempt at a clear exposition. Briefly, the Crusaders set up on feudal lines their own (Flemish) emperor of Constantinople and their own (Venetian) patriarch. Thessaloniki became a separate kingdom that, for a while, stretched down to Athens. The Venetians, more interested in trade than in landed possessions, claimed the Aegean islands and coastal ports which commanded the sea route to Constantinople, while the French set up their own principality in the Peloponnese (Morea). The Greeks, as they can now be

called, retreated from Constantinople to Nicaea, where they established their rival 'empire'. A second Greek statelet sprang up in Epirus and a third, created by secession shortly before the Fall of Constantinople, in far-away Trebizond. The 'empire' of Nicaea proved the most successful of these new entities and was able to regain Constantinople in 1261 under the rule of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–82), founder of the last Byzantine dynasty. The Latin empire was now gone, but that did not remove the Latins from a dominant role in the Levant.

For all its symbolic significance, the recovery of Constantinople was not an unadulterated boon to the Byzantine cause. The centre of gravity of imperial policy now shifted to the West, whereas the Asiatic possessions were left unguarded and quickly succumbed to the Turks, the area closest to Constantinople (Bithynia) falling to the lot of Osman, founder of the Ottoman dynasty. While members of the dysfunctional Palaiologos family squabbled and fought each other in a series of civil wars in the 1320s, 1340s and 1350s, the chief gainers were, in the short run, an aggressive Serbia and, in the long run, the unstoppable Ottomans. When the Turks had crossed into Europe (1354), Constantinople was virtually encircled. The end would have come earlier but for the disastrous defeat of Sultan Bayezid I by Tamerlane at the Battle of Ankyra (1402), but the Ottomans soon recovered. Thessaloniki fell to them in 1430. Appeals for Western help (fig. 6), even the submission of the Byzantine Church – not for the first time – to the papacy at the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439) produced no effective response. The thousand-year-old walls of Constantinople could not withstand the Turkish cannon. Byzantium died fighting.

Fig. 6
The Emperor John VIII when he attended the Council of Ferrara, a portrait medal by Pisanello, *c.* 1438–43.
Cast bronze, diameter 10.3 cm
Musée du Louvre, Paris

For all their misery, the last two centuries of Byzantium produced a remarkable cultural efflorescence in scholarship and the arts. It went beyond the renascence of the ninth and tenth centuries by including the sciences (especially astronomy) and translations from Latin authors, who until that time had been haughtily ignored. Greek scholars, despairing of conditions at home, migrated to Italy, where they were received with open arms, and from there to France and Germany. The fruits of the last Byzantine revival thus went to feed not the subjugated Greeks, but the new humanism of Western Europe.

II

The Art of Byzantium
330–1453

ROBIN CORMACK AND MARIA VASSILAKI

Fig. 7 ←
Folio 328*v* of the *Sacra Parallela* of St John of Damascus, 800–40. Paint on parchment, 35.6 × 25.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Gr. 923

'Byzantium 330–1453' is the first international exhibition in London for fifty years to cover the whole range of Byzantine art. In 1958 a group of 247 works entitled 'Masterpieces of Byzantine Art' was shown in August and September at the Edinburgh Festival and in October and November at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. That exhibition was curated by Professor and Mrs David Talbot Rice, and the emphasis was, they said, on appreciating 'the richness of the material, the finish of its craftsmanship, its profound artistic quality, its deep spiritual character, all virtually unequalled among the arts of the past'. The concise catalogue and the subsequent, more discursive book *The Art of Byzantium* (1959) by David Talbot Rice, which he says was directly inspired by the exhibition, placed great critical emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of Byzantine art. The chronological range chosen for the 1958 exhibition was much the same as for 'Byzantium 330–1453', with the exception that a number of icons produced after 1453 were included. Some works that appeared then make a reappearance here: the cover of the 1958 catalogue illustrated the coloured ivory with the coronation of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59) from the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow (cat.68). The 1958 catalogue regretted, however, that many objects on the original wish list could not, for various reasons, come to London (nothing at all came from America). Conditions have changed in 2008, but equally some highly desirable objects proved too fragile to travel and others cannot be loaned for various reasons.

What is Byzantium?

Readers of this book may wish again to appreciate the skill and virtuosity of the (mostly anonymous) artists of Byzantium. But the notion of 'masterpieces' is now much more problematic when looking at other cultures, and today we expect a more questioning interaction with art. Whereas fifty years ago the responsibility of the professional art historian was seen to lie in the authentication of the date and place of manufacture of each object, the aims of art history are now more ambitious. In 1958 for an object to be labelled 'Byzantine', a decision was based on whether it could be described as of high quality and if it might have been made in Constantinople or by an artist trained in Constantinople but perhaps working outside the capital city. Today there is no consensus at all on what Byzantine or Byzantium means; indeed, a recent analysis even speaks of Byzantium as a 'myth' or a 'mirage'.[1] And Byzantine art is often treated less as a collection of masterpieces than as a wide range of objects, each with a function, often religious, in everyday life and activities. Byzantine art is seen as embedded in every aspect of society: it is 'evidence', therefore, in a debate about that society and its aspirations and assumptions.

And the answer is …

The challenge is to find Byzantium through its art. This is not easy. How far can we understand early England on the evidence of Stonehenge, for example? Or the Roman Empire through walking around the Coliseum? The equivalent monument for Byzantium is the Church of St Sophia (fig.8). A medieval response to entering that great church has come down to us: travellers from Kiev in 988 were so overwhelmed that they said they did not know if they were in heaven or on earth.[2] This tells us that scale, rich decoration, ceremonial and incense all combined to enhance a sacred building, but it does not tell us more than the shared values and sensitivities of the period, and its love of formality in public life. This was a society that had strong public beliefs but whose inner thoughts are veiled in its opaque literature and its understated art. Predominantly its literature was in Greek (which was the language of government but not of all the people, and which was more artificial and formally constructed than everyday speech) and, apart from the Bible and practical liturgical books, the literate audience (perhaps a mere tenth of the population) read lives of saints, sermons and histories, very little poetry and fewer novels. The viewers of its art were familiar with images whose content was visually restrained but symbolically rich. For example, there are many images of the Crucifixion in Byzantine art, since the death and resurrection of Christ is the central tenet of Christianity, but they express the theology rather than the physical sufferings of Christ or the emotions of the spectators (cat.244 is a rare case of a Crucifixion so

Fig. 8
St Sophia, Constantinople, mother-church of Byzantium

emotional that it is only explicable to us as the work of a Byzantine artist responding to a Western patron's instructions). The extreme realism of Grünewald's sixteenth-century Isenheim altarpiece is unthinkable at any time in Byzantium. Yet the inner spirituality of Byzantine and Western Christians cannot have differed in intensity. Although Byzantium lasted for over 1,000 years, its icons and circumstances are often supposed to have remained static and unchanging. As we turn the pages of this book, we can question these interpretations and ask how change can be tracked in Byzantium.

Constantine the Great (306–37) founded the city in his name, and so Byzantium evokes the Roman Empire and his conversion to Christianity. His traditional image as a Roman emperor (cat.5) is intended to mark where power lay in a centralised state, whose world mission was to be defined by its Christian faith. Constantine was the leader of a community based not on ethnicity but on a shared Orthodox culture. The art of the Early Christian centuries shown here does illuminate exactly this past legacy and future programme. The Jonah sculptures (cats 1, 2) and the Good Shepherd (cat.3) are in the direct traditions of Hellenistic art and are just some of many works that emphasise the Greco-Roman continuities of Byzantine art. Old artistic forms are used to clothe Jewish and Christian stories that broadcast the new promise of salvation and Paradise for the convert. Byzantine art employed traditional ideas, yet the new religious art avoided other familiar forms: the idea of a venerated cult image, as in the pagan temple, was rejected, and several centuries were to pass before the now-familiar image of the bearded Christ was formulated.[3] In 1958 the origins of Byzantine art were often sought in the East, with Byzantium seen as antipathetic to Classical art. Today more emphasis is laid on the Greco-Roman sources of Christian art in the Mediterranean lands, but this still means that several different regional traditions converged in the Middle Ages. The influence of Egypt as much as Italy can be seen in the materials. But this does not mean that all Byzantine art was homogeneous, or that Constantinople was the only producer of this Byzantine art. A number of works included here were produced in other regions of the Orthodox world, and respond to several traditions: the ampullae which contained sacred oil from the Holy Land (cats 26, 27) were brought to Monza around 600 and were seen by Westerners as precious relics from the East. They are part of Byzantine art, but their history is worked out far outside Constantinople. The silver paten from the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat.286) has similar imagery to the ampullae, but its origin is even further from Constantinople, probably from the Nestorian church in the East. Such works as these show that Byzantine art served a community much wider than the city of Constantinople.

A look at these early works sets in front of us a self-consciously 'modern' society that recognises its roots; pagan forms combined with Jewish sacred writings have been reinterpreted in a developing Christian art which supports the new ethical and political values, and which defines the structures of power, both human and divine. The prevalence of images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and Child and the saints, and

of the Gospel events operate on many levels: for example, they define the best models for humans to imitate in their lives, they reiterate the truth of Christian doctrine and they act as reminders of the importance of the family unit within society. But they are much more than didactic objects. They can give solace in time of trouble and they act as a focus for prayer for good health and a prosperous family. The word 'icon' is so obviously appropriate for works of art that are not only pictures, but also representations of the ideal life and adjuncts of prayer and worship.

The progressive early Byzantine development of art was challenged by the iconoclast emperors of the eighth and ninth centuries, who banned the production and display of images of Christ, the Virgin and the saints. This period of reformation of art has intrigued historians, who have offered many differing explanations and motivations, from puritanism to a power struggle between the emperor and the expanding hierarchies of Church and monastery. The failure of iconoclasm or, as it was called, the 'Triumph of Orthodoxy' (as in cat.57) resulted in figurative art becoming the essential identifying feature of Byzantium from the ninth century. The art of the ninth and tenth centuries, produced during the successful military expansion of the empire under the Macedonian dynasty, and specifically under the scholar-emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (cat.68), offers us new interests in art. To this period belongs the development of Byzantine enamel production and the expansion of production of works in ivory and other materials. The court in Byzantium was at the centre of such luxury arts. Some works emphasise the Classical interests of the literate élites who continued to read the works of Greek Antiquity, and were consumers of newly produced manuscripts of famous authors, now written in minuscule instead of the majuscule script which had been the norm until the ninth century. The majuscule script was still used in an illustrated ninth-century manuscript of the *Sacra Parallela* of John of Damascus, an anthology of quotations from the Bible and Patristic texts intended to provide moral and ascetic inspiration, including over 1,000 thumbnail sketches, among them one of an icon-painter copying an icon to illustrate a fourth-century text by St Basil: 'As the painters when they paint icons from icons, looking closely at the model, are eager to transfer the character of the icon to their own masterpiece, so must he who strives to perfect himself in all branches of virtue look to the lives of saints as if to living and moving images and make their virtue his own by imitation' (fig.7).[4] The text, in which a theologian gives his version of how Byzantine icons were produced, helps to document how art was understood to function in Byzantium.

Other works of the Middle Byzantine period emphasise the Greek pagan past (like the Veroli Casket [cat.66] or the gilt-glass cup from San Marco that mischievously combines obscure Classical imagery with fake Islamic writing [cat.81]). This period of Byzantine thinking was distinctively ambivalent in its uses of Antiquity. Writers like Michael Psellos in the eleventh century explored Platonic philosophical ideas to see if they might fit within a Christian framework.[5] Visually

the Veroli Casket shows that, with a good knowledge of pagan mythology, it was possible to produce sophisticated satire and humour which the equally knowledgeable viewer would appreciate. Particularly revealing about Byzantium and the past is the church at Skripou (see cat.183). Its patron, the protospatharios Leo, was a rich imperial official who owned the land around the church. From 873 to 874 he built the large church entirely by recycling columns and marbles from the nearby ancient city of Orchomenos (fig.9). He composed an original set of highly elegant verses in a proficient Classical style for inscription on the west wall, whereas the templon screen inside the church has animal and vegetal designs in utterly unclassical forms. The church stands on antique ruins, but it both celebrates and subverts the memory of Antiquity in its decoration. The fact is that Byzantium admired and imitated Antiquity, but it never simply reproduced it: Byzantine artistic aims and resources were very different from those of the ancient Greco-Roman world. Some historians have seen this as decline, and in some material ways life in Byzantium was less affluent than in Antiquity. But who can say that Pompeii was 'better' than Constantinople as a place to live?

Byzantium maintained an ambivalent dialogue with Antiquity throughout its entire existence, but it celebrated the fact that pagan Antiquity had been superseded by a Christian Roman Empire, and thus a superior culture had been created. It is therefore clear that life in Byzantium revolved around the religiosity

Fig. 9
The exterior west wall of the Church of Panagia, Skripou, built from 873 to 874 with columns and marbles taken from the nearby ancient city of Orchomenos by its patron, the wealthy protos-patharios Leo, who also composed the elegant, Classical-style wall inscriptions

of its new culture, and so did its art. Even in the home, in objects for special or everyday use, a mixture of Christian and secular references pervades. People wore pectoral crosses to ward off evil (cats 129, 199), and the passing of time was marked by Sunday worship, church festivals and holy days, and above all by the annual commemoration of Easter, which stimulated many of the works shown here, such as the double-sided icon from Kastoria (cat.246), which was carried in procession on Good Fridays. Ex-voto donations of art were made to churches, and the greatest beneficiaries of the patronage of the rich were the monasteries. The wealthy founder of a monastery (sometimes the emperor or an empress) could expect eventual burial within its precincts and perpetual commemorative prayers for remission of sins in the afterlife. Others could donate icons or icon covers or liturgical vessels so that their identity would be preserved after death.

Many works illustrated here are the outcomes of such donations and aspirations. From the modern perspective, we have the dilemma of how to interpret the great number of works of art (as we call them) of this kind. The re-run of Byzantine iconoclast thinking in the Reformation and the subsequent exclusion of images from many Protestant churches may have triggered criticism of the prevalence of Byzantine images as superstition or magic. But after iconoclasm the Orthodox church itself tried to disassociate connotations of magic from images in accepting that they did in some way partake of the supernatural so that the holy figures represented could receive the prayers and requests for intercession addressed to them.[6] The most powerful images of this kind were those of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria (cat.177). It was believed that the model for all these icons was an image of the Virgin and Child painted from the life by the Evangelist St Luke. His panel was believed to have survived in Constantinople and was venerated in the Hodegetria monastery until its destruction in 1453 (see cat.266 for a Russian version). The icon could be venerated in a special shrine in the monastery and was carried outside in a public procession every Tuesday. Over the centuries it was credited with many miraculous healings and benefits, and copies were equally believed to have miraculous powers.[7]

AFTER 1204

For centuries after its foundation Constantinople was regarded as the most fabulous city of the Middle Ages. This all changed after the sack in 1204 by the armies of the Fourth Crusade, and the establishment of the Latin kingdom of Constantinople, until its recapture in 1261 by the last Byzantine dynasty of emperors of the Palaiologan family who had been in exile at Nicaea. Constantinople lost many of its treasures: many went to San Marco in Venice, the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and other places in western Europe (fig.10). The works taken to the West came from the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors; from the Hippodrome, including the famous four gilded-bronze horses which, like many other antique statues, had been collected for the emperors and brought to Constantinople for public display; and from the treasuries of the churches of the city where relics of the saints were kept in gold and silver

Fig. 10
The richly decorated façade of the Basilica of San Marco, Venice. Modern copies of the four antique gilded-bronze horses carried off from Constantinople can be seen above the central portal (the originals are preserved from the pigeons inside the building)

reliquaries. Yet the final centuries of Byzantium produced a multitude of new works, micromosaics and icons in particular.

But one senses that, in this final period, a continual watch was being kept on surrounding, rival cultures. Some of these societies accepted Orthodoxy, as in the Balkans and the Russian lands, but these too were a potential threat to Byzantium, for in emulating and reproducing its visual language (as in the Gospels of Ivan Alexander [cat.287]), they were posturing as future successors to Constantinople; indeed, in due course Moscow was to be claimed as a third Rome. Equally it was impossible not to fear the ever-closer encroachment of the Ottoman Turks (whose art, too, partly appropriated Byzantine ideas and techniques), and, even though the emperors went to the West to ask for help against Islam, the proposed union of the churches of East and West declared at the Council of Florence in 1439, much promoted by the future Cardinal Bessarion (cat.253), was never accepted by the clergy and people of Constantinople. Formerly Byzantine territories lost to the Crusaders, like the islands of Cyprus and Crete, never returned to imperial control, but their mixed populations of Orthodox and Catholic sponsored a new form of the icon that combined traditional Byzantine forms with the greater naturalism of the Italian Renaissance. The most prolific of artists in Crete was Angelos Akotantos (cats 238, 239). His work brings out one of the most conspicuous changes in the history of the icon: the artist's readiness to sign his work. Up to the twelfth century, Byzantine icons are anonymous productions of undocumented artists, but from that century onwards artists began to sign their paintings.[8] Angelos is known from several signed works and from the evidence of his will of 1436, which records the paintings in his workshop and his wish that his materials be inherited by his (unborn) son.

This different world in which we can begin to identify artists and their interests coincides (by chance) with the end of Byzantium. The history of art is most familiar as a scientific discipline when art can be matched with its artists as known personalities.[9] The challenge of Byzantium is to read its art without the anecdotal help of the lives of its artists, and with texts which delight to tease rather than edify. When Photios in 864 wrote a homily to inaugurate a church, he praised the mosaic floor in these words: 'The pavement, which has been fashioned into the forms of animals and other shapes by means of variegated tesserae, exhibits the marvellous skill of the craftsmen, so that the famous Pheidias and Parrhasios and Praxiteles and Zeuxis are proved in truth to have been mere children in their art and makers of figments.'[10] If we stand in front of such a mosaic floor as that from Thebes (cat.8), we might remember that a Byzantine like Photios would have used it as an opportunity to show off his learning. That tells us a lot about Byzantine intellectuals and their mindset, but less about how the artist, the patron and the Byzantine public thought about their art.

I

The Beginnings of Christian Art

THOMAS F. MATHEWS

Detail of cat.8 ←

THE BEGINNING OF BYZANTINE ART must be dated to the year 330 when Constantine inaugurated a new capital of the Roman Empire on the ancient city of Byzantium, renaming it Constantinople after himself.[1] This city, mistress of the medieval world until its fall in 1453, has been largely supplanted by modern Istanbul. The great porphyry column that carried the emperor's statue in the centre of Constantinople's unprecedented circular forum still stands, but the statue and the two-storey colonnade that surrounded it with a collection of antique sculptures are all missing. Grand colonnaded avenues crossed the city, punctuated by plazas with statues that proclaimed the dynasty which Constantine hoped to found, including his mother Helena in the Augustaeum and his four sons in the Philadelpheion. The figures of his sons, carved in porphyry, were carried off to Venice, where they stand at the entrance of the Doge's Palace, embracing one another and clutching their swords.

However, the most extensive surviving decorative elements in the new city are the mosaics of the Termae Constantinianae, actually erected by Constantine's son Constantios (337–61), which were removed to the Istanbul Archaeological Museum from their site beneath Istanbul's present town-hall (fig. 11).[2] Scenes of the hunt, the wealth of the earth and joyous Dionysiac imagery in rich frames testify to the copious inheritance of antique art by the artists of the new capital. But none of it is Christian. The population of the city, newly arrived immigrants from all over the empire, brought with them their old pre-Christian cults and culture, including a rich repertoire of Classical imagery that formed the first nucleus of Byzantine art.

The first beginnings of Christian art, however, antedate the founding of Constantinople. The growth of Christianity was very gradual. In Egypt, the only province where one can trace the numbers, Christians made up less than 20 per cent of the population when the Church was first recognised in Constantine's decree of 313; by the middle of the fourth century this had risen to 50 per cent, and by the beginning of the following century risen again, to over 80 per cent.[3] One can imagine a parallel growth in other centres of the empire, faster or slower in different regions. The Roman administration at first regarded Christians as a troublesome offshoot of Judaism, which they suspected of atheism and conspiracy, and intermittently persecuted for disloyalty. Systematic persecution was instituted by Decius (249–51) and Valerian (253–60), who arrested the clergy and set up commissions requiring citizens to sacrifice to the traditional gods. But Gallienus (260–68) restored Christian properties and civil rights and a truce ensued for some 40 years, during which the Church experienced unparalleled growth. It is in the course of this 'Little Peace' that Christian art makes its first substantial appearance in the catacomb paintings of Rome which peak in these decades.[4]

Unlike the grand imperial commissions that accompanied the founding of Constantinople, this was a popular art that owed its existence to the patronage of a Christian middle class wealthy enough to afford the services of professional excavators who carved the elaborate network of galleries into the volcanic stone, and skilled painters who developed a repertoire of Christian imagery. Significantly, this development took place without discussion or debate, images being customary with burial in Late Antiquity. The catacombs belonged to the Church and the clergy were buried there with the laity, implying that there was general acceptance of images in both lay and ecclesiastical circles.[5]

'Christian art' is by definition religious in subject-matter and in purpose. It belongs therefore to the religious realm and its rise must be traced in the religious life of the Late Antique world. Despite the popular perception that Christianity overthrew the ancient cults, a sharp decline in the officially sponsored ancient religions had already occurred in the second and third centuries. The Jews lost their temple in the Sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70 and with it their ancient priesthood came to an abrupt end. The ancient priesthood of Egypt came to a similar if less abrupt end with the cessation of government funding. For thousands of years the pharaohs had recorded their construction and dedication of temples, and Roman emperors did the same in Egypt, but at a rapidly declining rate, virtually ceasing with Antoninus Pius (138–61). By the mid-third century most temples had fallen into disuse and priests disappear from documents. The decline of temple worship, however, did not entail the abandonment of religion itself but its privatisation.[6] In Egypt this is traceable in a multiplicity of domestic shrines in the Fayum, where the traditional cults were carried out in more intimate circumstances. Altars for incense are found and vessels for purification rites and libations, while images of the traditional gods appear in wall paintings in niches or on smaller portable objects in terracotta or panel paintings that served as votive offerings. At the same time, prior to Constantine, Christian worship was also carried on in domestic chapels or house-churches, which,

Fig. 11
Maenad, from Saraçhane, 337–61.
Mosaic, 110 × 110 cm
Ayasofya Museum, Istanbul, inv. no. 15

Fig. 12
Good Shepherd table support, *c.*300. Marble, height 110 cm

Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens

judging from the Roman walled city of Dura Europos, *c.*250, were also decorated with images.

Christian theologians emphasised how they differed in belief and morality from their neighbours, whom they referred to as Gentiles or pagans, but in fact there were many areas of continuity in religious practice and observance. For example, seasonal festivals such as the celebration of the rising of the Nile in Egypt or the spring planting festival in Rome, called the Robigalia, were continued into Christian times on the very same dates. St Shenoute was invoked to make the Nile flood. Similarly, the practice of 'incubation', by which a sick person might spend the night at a holy shrine in expectation of a cure, continued into Christian times. The shrine of Isis at Menouthis outside Alexandria was a favourite place for incubation and Christians continued the practice there, where eventually Cyril of Alexandria installed the relics of Saints Cyrus and John in 484. Many practices surrounding burial were also continuous. In the Greco-Roman world burial was commonly accompanied by invocation of the gods, who were regarded as controlling the next world, such as Dionysos, Heracles and Demeter. Dionysos, besides being the god of fertility, as celebrated by his worshippers, the mosaic satyrs and maenads in the baths of Constantinople, was also protector of the dead and guide of souls to a happier life. His popularity in Roman art continued into the earliest Christian funerary imagery, with vines and fruit, personifications of seasons, and putti harvesting and crushing grapes (cat. 9.1). Such imagery was regarded as equally appropriate in the mosaics of the grand mausoleum of Constantine's daughter in Rome or the painted catacomb tombs of more modest citizens. Heracles was also common in Roman mortuary iconography, for he slew the many-headed Cerberus that guarded the netherworld. His figure is frequently found carrying the offering table in tombs. Christians used the same offering tables, but, instead of Heracles, the supporting figure is the Good Shepherd (cat.3).

The introduction of the Good Shepherd marks the first step in a decisively Christian iconography. The figure is ubiquitous, appearing from Britain to Syria, from mural decoration to terracotta lamps. He is a figure with many values. Christ identified himself as the Good Shepherd who goes in search of the stray and lays down his life for his sheep (Luke XV, 3–7; John X, 16–18), and Psalm XXIII makes him into a kind of *psychopompus* like Dionysos or Heracles, guiding the soul through 'the valley of the shadow of death'. At the same time he often retains traces of his pagan antecedents in the boyish face and curly hair that resemble closely the youthful Dionysos and in the fawn-skin cloak of his revelries, which he wears in the Athens example (fig.12). The Good Shepherd was soon surrounded in the catacombs of Rome as well as, somewhat later, in the tombs of Thessaloniki with an ever-expanding repertoire of subjects from the Old and New Testaments employed in staccato, emblematic fashion to evoke stories of deliverance. Jonah and the Whale, Susanna and the Elders (cat.9.2), and the miraculous cures of Christ are typical. The images carried an implied prayer for similar deliverance of the deceased.

The production of elegant marble sarcophagi in Rome is the most copious document of the development of Early Christian iconography. Nearly 1,000 examples survive, reaching a peak in the late fourth century. Made of expensive marble from Carrara or Greece, they cost hundreds of times the expense of simple interment, and were intended for clientele of the highest social standing, such as the example made in 359 for Junius Bassus, the prefect of the city. At first produced in pagan workshops with a mixed range of subjects both pagan and Christian, they developed in the period after Constantine an exclusively biblical iconography, carved in Christian workshops. The careers of Abraham, Moses, Jonah and Daniel were especially popular and New Testament themes were less common. In the second half of the fourth century, however, scenes of Christ's miracles came to prevail (fig.13). Towards the end of the century more ambitious works were introduced in formal architectural framings, organised around converging compositions that covered the entire front of the sarcophagus, with twelve Apostles flanking Christ.

The Enthroned Christ with his Apostles in the mosaic of Santa Pudenziana, Rome, is the earliest analogous apse composition.[7] A work of the second decade of the fifth century, it is a landmark in the history of art (fig.14). The apse of a church provided the largest unified space available to an artist (8.8 metres across at Santa Pudenziana). To meet this challenge, a new medium was invented, namely mural mosaic. In Greco-Roman art, mosaic had been a medium of floor decoration. When liberated from the scuffing of feet, the mosaic could include a wider range of fragile materials: coloured glass cubes of saturated red and deep blue, iridescent fragments of mother-of-pearl,

Fig. 13
Miracles of Christ flanking Susanna and the Elders on the 'Trees Sarcophagus', *c.*360. Marble, 60 × 140 cm

Musée départemental Arles antique, Arles

Fig. 14
Christ Enthroned among his Apostles, *c.*415. Apse mosaic.
Santa Pudenziana, Rome

gold and silver foil sandwiched in glass. This introduced a radically new aesthetic. Religiously too it was a very new kind of image, for it was a grand cultic icon, that is a non-narrative painting meant for direct veneration. By contrast, cemetery art was rarely seen; one visited the tombs only on the anniversaries of the deceased, and the images were intended to tell a story rather than to be objects of devotion. But placed at the end of the nave before the staring gaze of the faithful, the mosaic of Christ at Santa Pudenziana was offered for direct veneration, and Christ was given the full beard and long hair that had been used to distinguish Jupiter from the other gods.

The veneration of images sprang directly from the votive use of images in the Greco-Roman world; in the ancient world communication with divinity always involved images. The explanation for the practice is seen in the inscription that Christ holds in his book, which reads in Latin, 'The Lord who preserved unharmed the church of Pudenziana'. The title preserver, or *conservator*, was used in Roman dedicatory inscriptions thanking the gods, or sometimes the emperor, for their protection; the making of the Pudenziana mosaic image was therefore an offering in thanks for deliverance, very probably referring to the church's safety during the Sack of Rome by the Visigoths under Alaric in 410.[8] This kind of practice, known as the votive offering of images, was commonplace in the Greco-Roman world and was responsible for a large part of the artistic production.[9] Whether one had received a civic honour, a victory in the games, or a cure, one wanted to express one's appreciation to the gods, and this was done most commonly by having an image made of the god to whom one was addressing thanks. A large portion of the artistic production of the ancient world sprang from such a motivation; the Acropolis in Athens, for example, was crowded with hundreds of votive statues. In Roman times wooden panel paintings, that is to say icons in the art historian's use of the term, came to be used in this context as well, as is documented frequently in Pompeian painting and in the survival of a large corpus of pre-Christian icons in Egypt (fig.15). One must infer that the Christian use of icons was continuous with this ancient use, as the construction and compositions of Early Christian icons echo their pre-Christian antecedents. When Bishop Eusebios of Caesarea in Palestine describes seeing icons of Christ, Peter and Paul, they must have been common in private domestic use; but he felt that they should not be used in the new public church buildings that were appearing everywhere in the 320s and 330s. However, icons became very popular and within a century they decorated churches all over the Mediterranean.

Fig. 15
Isis or Demeter, found in a grave, second century. Tempera over white ground on wood panel, 25 × 8 cm
Ägyptisches Museum, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. 14443

1 ←

Jonah Cast Up

Eastern Mediterranean,
second half of the third century
Marble, 41.5 × 36 × 18.5 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1965.238

2 ↓

Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree

Eastern Mediterranean,
second half of the third century
Marble, 32.3 × 46.3 × 18 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1965.239

3 ←

Table support with figure of the Good Shepherd

Asia Minor (?), mid-fourth century
Marble, 93 × 24 × 18 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, Ms 2491

4 ↓

Cameo with warrior horseman

First half of the fourth century
Carved, polished, multi-layered sardonyx, 15 × 19 × 2.5 cm

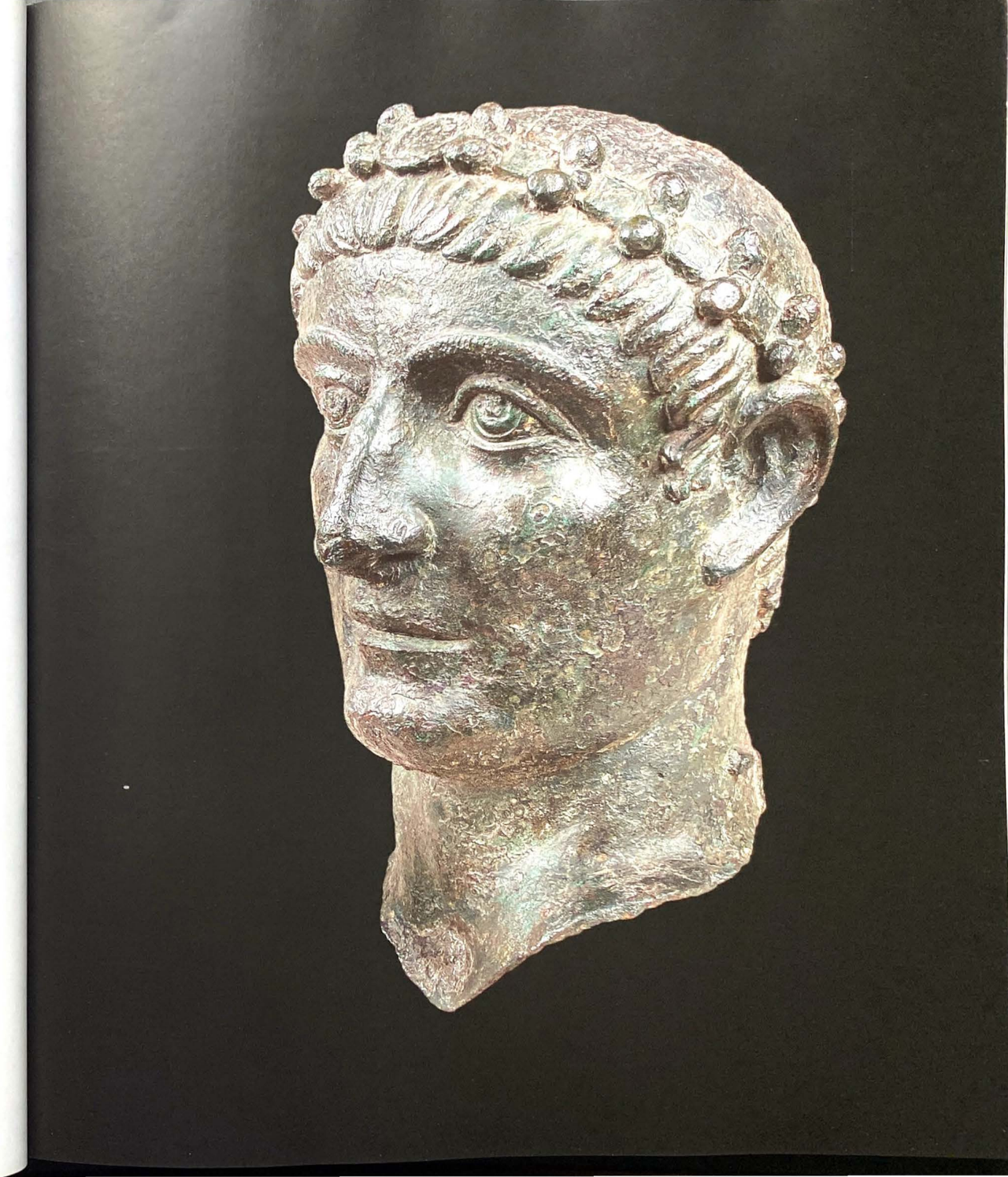
National Museum, Belgrade, 116/IV

5 →

Head of Constantine I, the Great

325–30
Cast bronze, gilt, height 36 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, 764/IV



6 ←

Fragment of a sarcophagus front with St Peter

Constantinople, last third of the fifth century
Proconnesian marble, 102 × 80 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 3751

7 →

Relief with besieged city

Egypt, fifth century
Wood, 45 × 22 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 4782

8 ↓

Part of a mosaic pavement with personifications of the months

Thebes, early sixth century
Stone and marble, 340 × 66 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis

9.1 ↑ 9.2 →

Tomb with wall paintings, including *Susanna and the Elders*

Thessaloniki, early fifth century
Tomb and detached fresco,
202 × 144 × 107 cm, 170 × 127.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, BT 17A-B

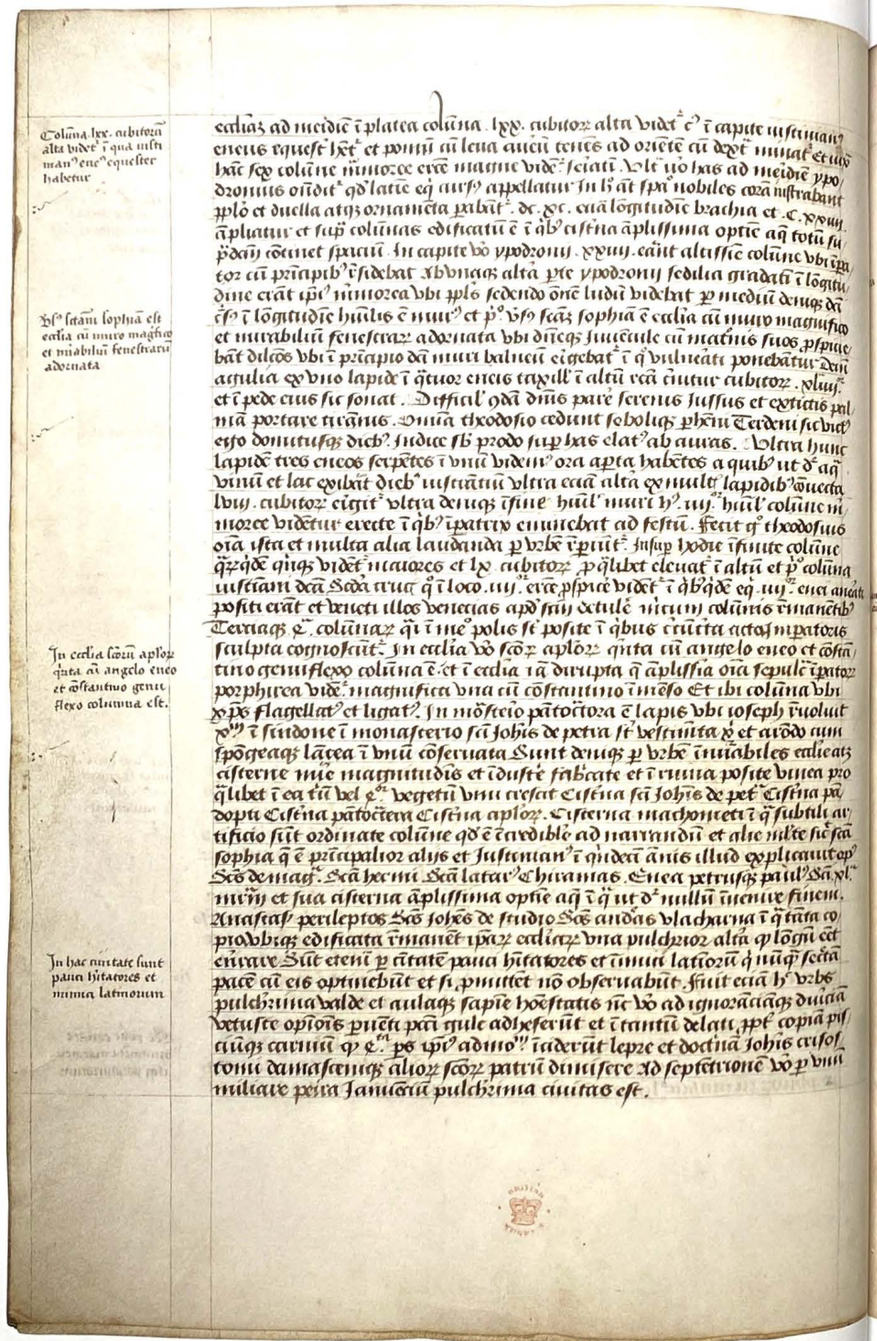
10.1–3 →→

Three chair ornaments personifying Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria

Rome, after 324
Gilded silver, 18.7 × 7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1866.1229.21, 1866.1229.23, 1899.1229.24

(The fourth chair ornament, personifying Antioch, illustrated second from left, is not exhibited)



Columna lxx. cubitoꝝ alta vidēt ī qua ascendit man⁹ eius⁹ equestr habetur

Ysᵃ sacra sophia est ecclia cū muro magnifico et mirabili fenestrarū adornata

In ecclia sc̄ōr apl̄oꝝ quata cū angelo eneo et cōstantino geniflexo columna est.

In hac ciuitate sunt pauci hystriones et minima latrocinia

ecclias ad meridiē ī platea columna .lxx. cubitoꝝ alta vidēt⁹ et ī capite ymperatoꝝ eneus equestr⁹ et ponit⁹ ad leua antiq⁹ tenēs ad orientē ad dext⁹ imperat⁹ et ultra hāc sc̄a columna nimiꝝ erat magnificus vidēt⁹ sciatis. Vle quo tras ad meridiē ppe dromus ostendit⁹ qd latine ex aurig⁹ appellatur in l⁹ ait spāt⁹ nobiles coram ipsis ludebant ppe et duella atq; ornamenta gerebāt⁹ de pc. cui longitudo brachia et .c. pedū. Aplatum et sup columnas edificatū est ī qb⁹ cisterna apl̄issima optic aq totū sup pedēs tenet spaciū. In capite vo ypodromi .xxvij. erant alie columne vbi equi et quadrige principib⁹ videbant Xbiꝝ alta pte ypodromi sedilia gradati ī longitudine erāt ipi⁹ nimiꝝ ubi ppe secundo one ludi videbant p medium deniq; de cs ī longitudo hui⁹ est nimi⁹ et p⁹ vsq; sacꝝ sophia ē celia ad mirū magnificū et mirabilū fenestraꝝ adornata ubi diecꝝ iuuenule ad matutinos suos ppare bāt dilectos ubi ī principio dei muri balneū erigebat⁹ ī q⁹ balneati ponebātur. Deinde angulū qd uno lapide ī quoꝝ encis erat ill⁹ altū erā ciuitate cubitoꝝ .xlvij. et ī pede eius sic sonat. Difficil' qdā dñs pare serenus iussus et extinctis primā portare ruinas. Omnia theodosio cedunt sobolisq; phēm Terdeni sic dict⁹ esto domitusq; dich⁹ iudice fl̄ prodo sup hos elat⁹ ab annos. Ultra hunc lapide tres encos sepētes ī unū videm⁹ ora aperta habētes a quib⁹ ut d⁹ aq vinū et lac q̄libet dich⁹ ustriātū ultra eam alta q̄ multi lapidib⁹ sūcta lxvij. cubitoꝝ erigit⁹ ultra deniq; ī fine hall' muri h⁹. xij. hall' columne m̄ morē videt⁹ erecte ī qb⁹ patric⁹ commebat ad festū. Fecit q⁹ theodosius ora ista et multa alia laudanda p⁹be ī p⁹uit⁹. Insup hodie ī finite columne q̄drāte q̄nq; videt⁹ marmores et lx cubitoꝝ p̄ q̄libet elevat⁹ ī altū et p⁹ columna ustiana dei Sōa erat q̄ ī loco .xij. erē pp̄ie videt⁹ ī ab⁹q; de eq .xij. eius antiq positi erāt et veneti illos venetias apd sāy actuale vitium columis remanebāt Tertiaq; c̄ columnaꝝ q̄ ī me polis sc̄ posite ī q̄bus ciuitia acta sup imperatoris sculpta cognoscūt⁹. In ecclia vo sc̄oꝝ apl̄oꝝ quinta cū angelo eneo et cōstantino geniflexo columna ē. et ī ecclia iā diruta q̄ apl̄issima ora sepulc̄ imperatoꝝ porphirea vidēt⁹ magnifica vna cū cōstantino ī medio Et ibi columna ubi xp̄s flagellat⁹ et ligat⁹. In monasterio patriarcha ē lapis ubi ioseph volunt p⁹ ī fundone ī monasterio sc̄i Johis de petra sc̄ bethsamita p et aridū aum spongeaq; lancea ī unū coseruata Sunt denique p⁹be innumerabiles ecclie atq; asserine mie magnitudis et iducte fabricate et ī ruina posite unus pro q̄libet ī ea tū vel e⁹. vegetū unū erexit Cisterna sc̄i Johis de pet⁹ Cisterna pa dopta Cisterna patriarcha Cisterna apl̄oꝝ. Cisterna machometi ī q⁹ subtili artificio fuit ordinate columne qd ē incredibile ad narrandū et alie mlte sc̄e sophie q̄ ē principalior alys et Justinian⁹ ī q̄ndam annis illud explicauit op⁹ Sōs demagi⁹. Sca hermi Sca latar⁹ Chiramas. Enea petrus⁹ primus Sa pl⁹. mūm et sua asserina apl̄issima optic aq ī q̄ ut d⁹ nullū finem. Anastas⁹ perileptos Sōs johes de studio Sōs andas blachurna ī q̄ tam ppodiose edificata ī manet ipaz ecclaz una pulchrior alta q̄ logū est curare Sūt etenī p ciuitate plura hospitatores et timui latioꝝ q̄ nūq; scā pace q̄ eis optinebūt et si promittet nō observabūt. Sunt ecclā h⁹ vbs pulchrima valde et aulaq; sapie hoēstatis nc vo ad ignorandaq; duas vetuste opiois pulch pcī gule adiecerūt et ī tantū delati ppe copia pis cibiq; carnium q e⁹. pe ipi⁹ adunio⁹ ī ciderūt lepre et doctna Johis crisost tomi damascenq; alioꝝ sc̄oꝝ patrū dimisere ad septētrionē vo p unū miliare pera Januensiū pulchrima ciuitas est.

II

CRISTOFORO BUONDELMONTI
(*c.*1385–*c.*1430)

Liber insularum archipelagi (Book of the Islands of the Archipelago), folio 154*v*–155*r*

Ghent, 1482–85
Ink and paint on parchment, 36.5 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Arundel 93

2

From Constantine to Iconoclasm

HENRY MAGUIRE

Detail of cat. 24 ←

The conversion of Constantine in the early fourth century led to a gradual replacement of paganism by Christianity in the official life of the Roman Empire. The emperor became cut off from the old pantheon of deities, and placed instead in a close relationship with the Christian god. Addressing the sixth-century emperor Justinian, the court poet Paul the Silentiary declared: 'We know Christ is the Lord, we know it completely … Whence you have Him present as a colleague in your actions, whether you frame laws, whether you found cities, whether you build churches, or whether you set arms in motion, should that be necessary ... whence victory attaches to your labours, like a sign.'[1] The successful ruler was always partnered by Christ. In art, this association was expressed by a shared imagery derived from imperial rituals, as can be seen in the *adventus*, the venerable ceremony which welcomed the arrival of a dignitary, especially a triumphant emperor into a city.[2] A gold medallion from Constantinople (cat. 29) depicts an *adventus* of Justinian, who rides in full armour behind a personification of Victory holding a trophy. Beside the mounted emperor shines a star, an old symbol of the advent of a ruler. According to Menander, the author of a third-century manual for orators composing aulic speeches, a rhetorician had to welcome an emperor as a star from on high.[3] Byzantine portrayals of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem echoed the *adventus* of an emperor, in spite of the Gospel account of the event, which subverted the official ceremony by having Christ ride on an ass.[4] Even on a humble object, such as a sixth-century pilgrim's token (fig. 16), the triumph of Christ is resonant of imperial art. The image impressed into the clay depicts a winged angel leading Christ's mount, just as a winged Victory goes before Justinian's horse on the gold medallion.[5]

Fig. 16
Pilgrim's token, showing the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem, preceded by an angel, Eastern Mediterranean, sixth century. Earthenware, diameter 3.44 cm

Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, no. 986.181.80

In Early Byzantine art, the emperor and Christ shared not only the same ceremonials, but also the settings in which the rituals took place. A good example of this phenomenon is a sixth-century ivory now in the British Museum, London, which depicts an angel framed by an arch and standing at the top of a flight of steps (cat. 21). Originally, this ivory formed the right half of a diptych, whose left panel is now missing. The position of the angel at the top of the stairs has a parallel in the carvings of the base beneath the obelisk set up by Emperor Theodosios I in the Hippodrome of Constantinople (fig. 17). Here two officials can be seen standing on the steps that lead up to the imperial box, which was called the *kathisma*. A set of instructions for the attendance of the emperor at the chariot races, later incorporated into the tenth-century *Book of Ceremonies* of the Byzantine court, helps to explain the role of these attendants.[6] According to the *Book of Ceremonies*, before the start of the races the emperor was to take his place on the throne in the *kathisma*. An official named the *praepositos* was to station himself at the top of the stairs leading to the box, so that he could call upon the patricians to mount the steps and make obeisance to the enthroned emperor. After the patricians had gone down the stairs again, the *praepositos* at the top of the steps was to give them another sign, so that they could go to their places on the benches and watch the races.[7]

Two other passages in the *Book of Ceremonies* describe the promotion of a courtier to the office of *magistros*. One set of directions explains how the emperor will make a sign to the *praepositos*, who will then approach him and tell him the name of the candidate to be promoted.[8] The second set of instructions stipulates that the *praepositos* will lead the candidate 'to the feet of the emperors', who will be enthroned at the top of a flight of porphyry steps.[9] We see, then, that the angel portrayed in the ivory assumes the role of a palace official whose job it is to guide a candidate up the steps and into the presence of the ruler, who is, in this case, Christ. An inscription carved above the angel makes his role more explicit. It may be translated: 'Receive the suppliant before you, despite his sinfulness.' Thus the angel, like the *praepositos* in the earthly palace, is announcing to Christ the suppliant who will climb the stairs to his promotion in the palace of heaven. In the case of the ivory, we will never know who that person was, but, as ivory diptychs were associated with the élite, he must have been a man of very high status, possibly the emperor himself. In all likelihood, the individual mentioned in the inscription was depicted on the missing left-hand wing of the diptych.

Just as the court of Christ was perceived as being similar to that of the emperor, and vice versa, so also the empress and the Virgin reflected each other in art. In the Byzantine palace, there was a court of women, consisting of the empress and the wives and widows of prominent officials, just as there was a court of men. Each court had its own set of ceremonies, the one parallel to the other. There was, for example, eventually an *adventus* ritual for the arrival of an imperial fiancée at Constantinople, in which the women of the court went outside the city to welcome their future empress. When the empress appeared in state, she was surrounded by many of the same trappings of power as her husband.[10] An ivory relief of the sixth century (cat. 24) portrays a bejewelled empress enthroned beneath a domed canopy held up by four columns and screened by curtains. A similar canopy is described by the court poet Corippus in his account of the accession of Justin II (565–78) after the death of Justinian; it covered the throne of the emperor in the Great Consistory, a hall of the palace used for the reception of foreign embassies.[11] Thus the empress in the ivory is on display as the focal point of a reception in the palace, revealed to her visitors in all of her splendour by the parting of the curtains.

Fig. 17
The base of the obelisk of Theodosios, Istanbul, showing standing officials on the steps of the imperial box, 390

Another reception is portrayed on a sixth-century ivory now in the British Museum, which depicts the Adoration of the Magi (cat. 22). The

three Magi approach the Virgin and Child as foreign ambassadors. Their costumes, short mantles worn over long trousers and soft, pointed caps, are Persian. Their gestures derive from imperial ceremonial: each uses a fold of his mantle to drape his hands as he offers his tribute to the Virgin and Child. They are introduced to the enthroned pair by an angel holding a long staff with a jewel-studded cross at its tip. This angel replaces the *ostiarios*, a palace official attested from the sixth century, who, according to the *Book of Ceremonies*, introduced ambassadors at receptions.[12] Like the angel in the ivory, the *ostiarios* carried a staff adorned with precious stones.[13] Finally, we may note that the Virgin is not sitting in a simple house, but enthroned as an empress under an arched canopy carried on columns.

The Virgin reappears in a palatial setting on a later ivory which depicts the Annunciation (cat.23). In this carving, the Virgin has just risen from her throne, and is standing on its jewelled platform to receive Gabriel's message. Behind her is an elaborate building with a façade like that of a Classical temple, with ornate columns and capitals supporting a triangular pediment. This building probably represents the Virgin's house, which is here again portrayed as a palace. The location of the Annunciation outside the Virgin's house, and not, as the Gospel suggests, within it, proves the veracity of Christ's miraculous incarnation. The conception takes place out in the open view, not hidden in the inner quarters of the dwelling, where it might have been suspect.

In addition to portrayals of the emperor and empress, the Byzantines also made portraits of those holding office lower down the hierarchy, especially the consuls. During the fifth and early sixth centuries the consuls issued ivory diptychs to celebrate their accession to office. The last of these diptychs was commissioned by Basilius, who was consul in 541 (cat.15 from Florence). The better-preserved leaf of his diptych is divided horizontally into two unequal parts. In the upper zone we see the consul, who holds in his right hand the white handkerchief, or *mappa*, which he will throw as a signal to start the games in the circus in honour of his accession. Below, the charioteers race around the posts that mark the ends of the course.

In some consular diptychs we find an additional third zone added to the top of the composition. For example, the diptych of Clementinus, issued in Constantinople in 513, shows the consul in the centre, dressed in his official robes and holding the *mappa* (cat.13). Beneath his feet two slaves in short tunics pour out the largesse distributed by the consul at the games – coins, pieces of silver plate and palm fronds for the victors. At the top two medallions containing busts of the reigning emperor and empress, Anastasios and Ariadne, complete the hierarchy. Later Byzantine portraits of the saints expressed the stratification of the heavenly court in a similar way.[14] A sixth- or seventh-century painted icon of Saints Sergios and Bacchos portrays the pair beneath a medallion containing the bust of Christ (cat.313). In their earthly lives, Sergios and Bacchos had been members of the palace guard, before their imperial master, Maximian, martyred them for their faith. The golden torques around their necks mark them as members of an élite unit. According to their legend, the two soldiers were stripped of their torques when they were deprived of their military rank. Now, in the court of heaven, they wear them again as servants of their true master, Christ.

In the works of art that we have been considering, dating from the sixth and seventh centuries, the earthly and the heavenly courts mirrored each other. Even if the one court was not an exact reflection of the other, they certainly shared the same sense of order, with similar hierarchies, settings and ceremonials. With the advent of iconoclasm in the eighth century, the mirror was shattered. Ostensibly, from 730 until 843, with only one brief hiatus, the Byzantines were forbidden to venerate religious images. The reasons for this change of attitude were complex, but undoubtedly the sudden success of the Arabs had much to do with it. During the seventh century the Arabs steadily advanced at the expense of the Byzantine Empire, conquering Syria, Egypt and North Africa. They penetrated deep into Anatolia, and laid siege to Constantinople itself three times – the last occasion being during the reign of Leo III, the emperor responsible for introducing iconoclasm. The rise of the cult of icons in Byzantium had always caused some unease, as it appeared to contravene the Second Commandment against the worship of graven images.[15] Because the Arabs, following their Muslim faith, banned all representations of living creatures from their places of worship, their victories must have raised new concerns among the Byzantines about the role of images in their own lives and worship. Was God not punishing the Byzantines for their idolatry by favouring the Arabs?

In addition to the fear generated by Arab advances, Christian icons were overshadowed by another set of anxieties, which concerned the unorthodox use of images. A seventh-century bowl found on the island of Cyprus, which bears the image of an unidentified saint, illustrates some of these concerns (cat.45). As the man in the dish wears a torque, he may be Sergios or Bacchos. Originally there was probably another bowl with the companion saint, so that the two vessels formed a set. It is probable that the bowl was manufactured for domestic use.[16] A collection of miracles of the Egyptian saint Menas recounts how a citizen of Alexandria ordered a silversmith to produce a plate engraved with the name of the saint, from which he subsequently took his meals. After he had eaten, his slave washed the plate in the water of a lake.[17] One may imagine that the bowl from Cyprus could have been put to similarly mundane uses, so that the purpose of the saint's image was not to receive veneration, but to provide a blessing for the owner's meals. By the seventh century other household items, such as jewellery and clothing, were also being decorated with depictions of saints. Here again, the role of these images, which were often anonymous, was not to be the focus of legitimate worship,

Fig. 18
Folio 23*v* of the Khludov Psalter (cat.50), with the 815 iconoclast council of awash with blood, ninth century. Tempera, cinnabar, golden painting and ink on vellum, 19.5 × 15 cm

The State Historical Museum, Moscow, ms. 129

but rather to provide a kind of magical protection for the user.[18]

The dispute over icons raised violent passions. The supporters of images called Leo III 'the Saracen-minded' and engaged in an invective against iconoclasts and their perceived co-conspirators, Muslims and Jews.[19] The Khludov Psalter, a ninth-century manuscript produced in Constantinople during the aftermath of the iconoclastic dispute, vilifies the opponents of icons through its paintings (cat.50). At the bottom of one page an iconoclast is seen raising a sponge on a long pole to whitewash a bust of Christ, which is enclosed in a circular medallion like the portrait of Christ on the icon of Saints Sergios and Bacchos. To the right of the same page the artist makes a comparison, juxtaposing the destroyer of Christ's icon with the soldier at the Crucifixion who uses a pole to press a vinegar-soaked sponge against the face of Christ.

Another page in the Khludov Psalter depicts the iconoclast council of 815, which, after a short break, reinstated the ban on images (fig.18). The heretical council is a picture of disorder and disruption. At the centre is Emperor Leo V, flanked on the left by his co-conspirators, the iconoclast clergy. To the right, another group of clergy attack a circular icon of Christ with whitewash. In the right-hand margin, four streams of blood gush from the page and cascade to the floor, where the red fluid washes around the feet of the iconoclasts.[20] The four streams of blood are an inversion of the four rivers of Paradise, which Byzantine artists sometimes showed flowing from the base of the Cross. On this page the streams are symbols of death rather than of life. As in the case of the sixth- and seventh-century works of art that we examined earlier, the depictions of the iconoclasts in the Khludov Psalter mirror images associated with Christ, but now the reflection is reversed so that it becomes antithetical: the iconoclast emperor no longer imitates Christ as his colleague, but opposes him as his foe.

12

The Projecta Casket, from the Esquiline treasure

Rome, between 330 and 380
Silver embossed and partially gilt, 28.6 × 55.9 × 43.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, M&LA 1866.1229.1

13 ←

Diptych with Clementinus

Constantinople, 513
Ivory, each leaf 37 × 12.5 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10036

14 →

Ivory diptych leaf with a *venatio*

Rome or northern Italy, early fifth century
Ivory, 29.4 × 12 × 0.6 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10042

15 ←

Leaf of the consular diptych of Basilius

Rome (?), 541

Ivory, 34.5 × 13 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no. A8

16 →

Diptych with Asklepios and Hygieia

Rome, c.400–20

Ivory, each leaf 31.4 × 13.9 × 0.6 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M 10044

17
Plaque with Apollo and Daphne
Perhaps from Egypt, fifth or sixth century
Ivory, 12.2 × 8.8 cm

Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Paesaggistici di Ravenna, Museo Nazionale di Ravenna, inv. no. 1001

18
Plaque with Nereid with fruit-filled basket
Egypt, possibly Alexandria, fifth century
Animal bone, 4.8 × 14 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 18747. Gift of Loukas Benakis

19
The Antioch Chalice

Byzantine, from Syria, possibly Kaper Koraon or Antioch, first half of the sixth century
Silver cup set in footed silver-gilt shell, height 19.7 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection, 1950.150.4

20
Paten with the Communion of the Apostles

Constantinople or Syria, 565–78
Silver repoussé with gilding and inscription in niello, diameter 35 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection, BZ 1924.5

21

Ivory with Archangel

Constantinople, c. 525–550
Ivory, 42.8 × 14.3 × 0.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1903,0709.1

22

Ivory with Adoration of the Magi

Eastern Mediterranean, first half of the sixth century
Ivory, 21.5 × 12.3 cm

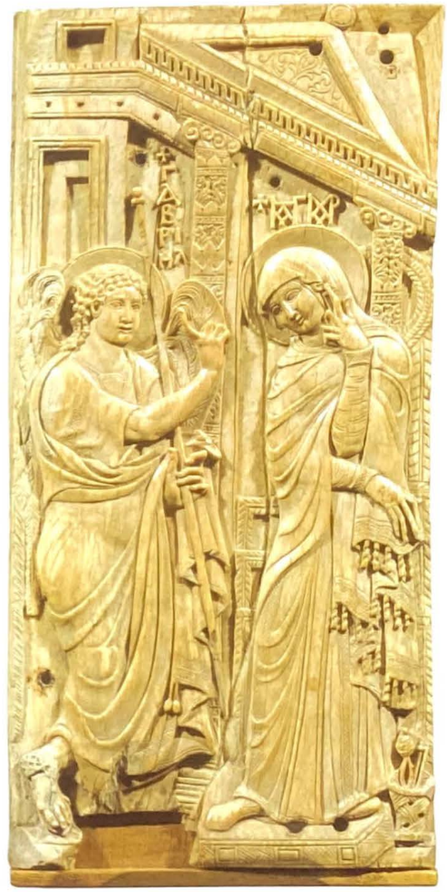
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1904,0702.1

23

Ivory with the Annunciation

Eastern Mediterranean, late seventh or early eighth century
Ivory, 19.7 × 9.4 cm

Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan, AVORIO 14



24 ←

Diptych leaf with a Byzantine empress

Sixth century
Ivory, traces of gilding and paint, 26.5 × 12.7 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Antikensammlung, X 29

25 →

Ivory diptych

Constantinople, mid-sixth century
Ivory, each panel 29 × 13 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. 564 and 565

26 ◂

Ampulla with images of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 6.4 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampoule 10

27 ◂

Ampulla with images of the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 7 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampoule 1

28 ▸

Gold pendant with the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Eastern Mediterranean, around AD 600
Gold, diameter (including suspension loop) 6.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1983,7-13.1

29 ▸

Copy from a cast of a now lost gold medallion of Justinian I (527–65)

Mint of Constantinople, 534 (?)–538
Electrotype, diameter 8.2 cm

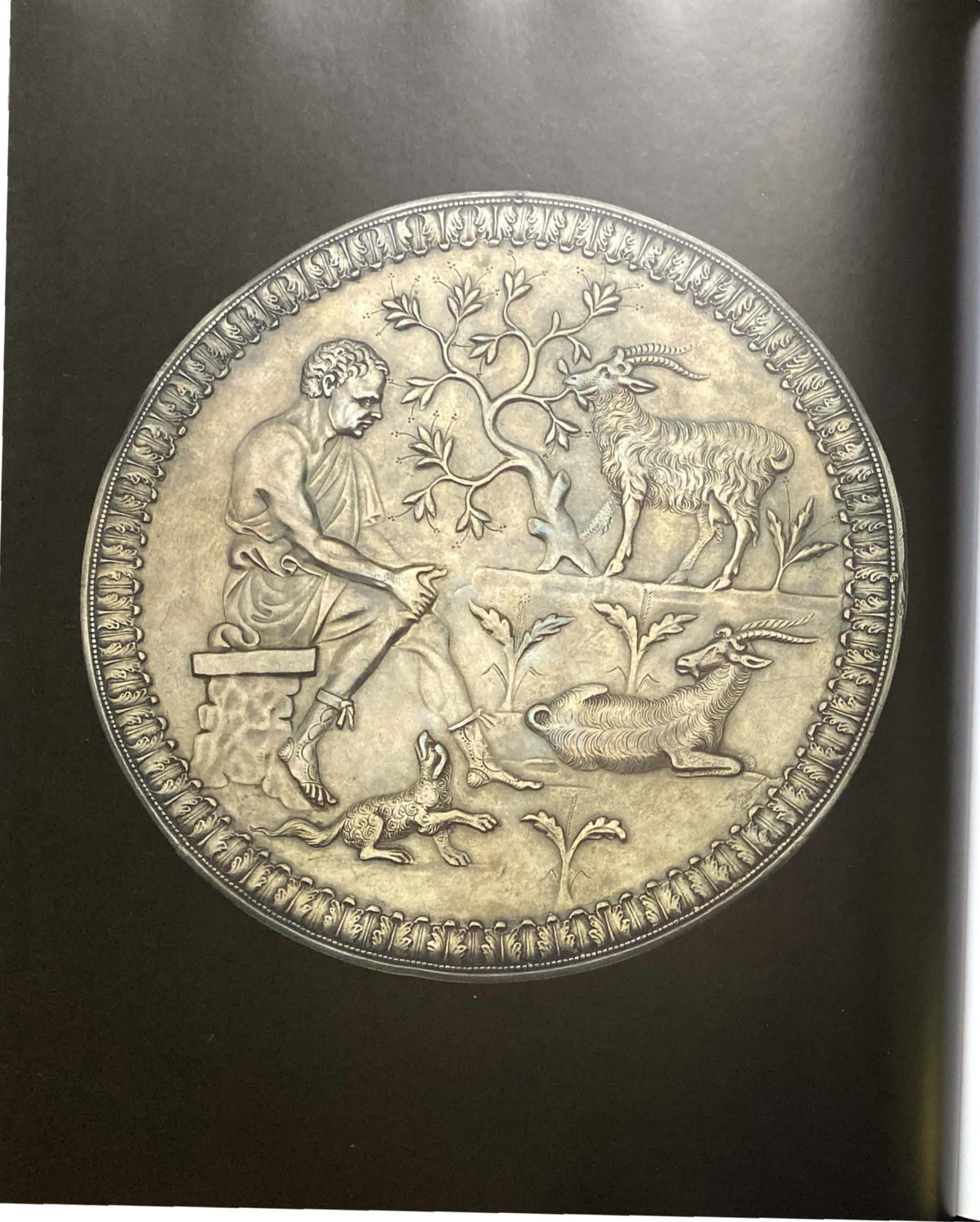
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, BMCP 25

30, 31, 32

Silver plates with scenes from the life of David

Constantinople, 613–629/30
Silver, diameter 14 cm, 26.8 cm, 14 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. nos J. 152–54



33 ←

Silver plate with goatherd, two goats and a dog

Constantinople, *c.*530 (?)
Chased and incised silver, diameter 23.8 cm; diameter of footring 9 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no 01 277

34 ↓

Chalice with four Apostles and the Cross

Syria, *c.*550–75
Chased silver with traces of partial gilding, height 16.8; diameter of cup 14 cm; diameter of foot 9.5 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 57 636

35 →

The Emesus Vase

Constantinople or Syria (?), end of the sixth century
Silver, 45 × 27 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Bj 1895

36
Censer

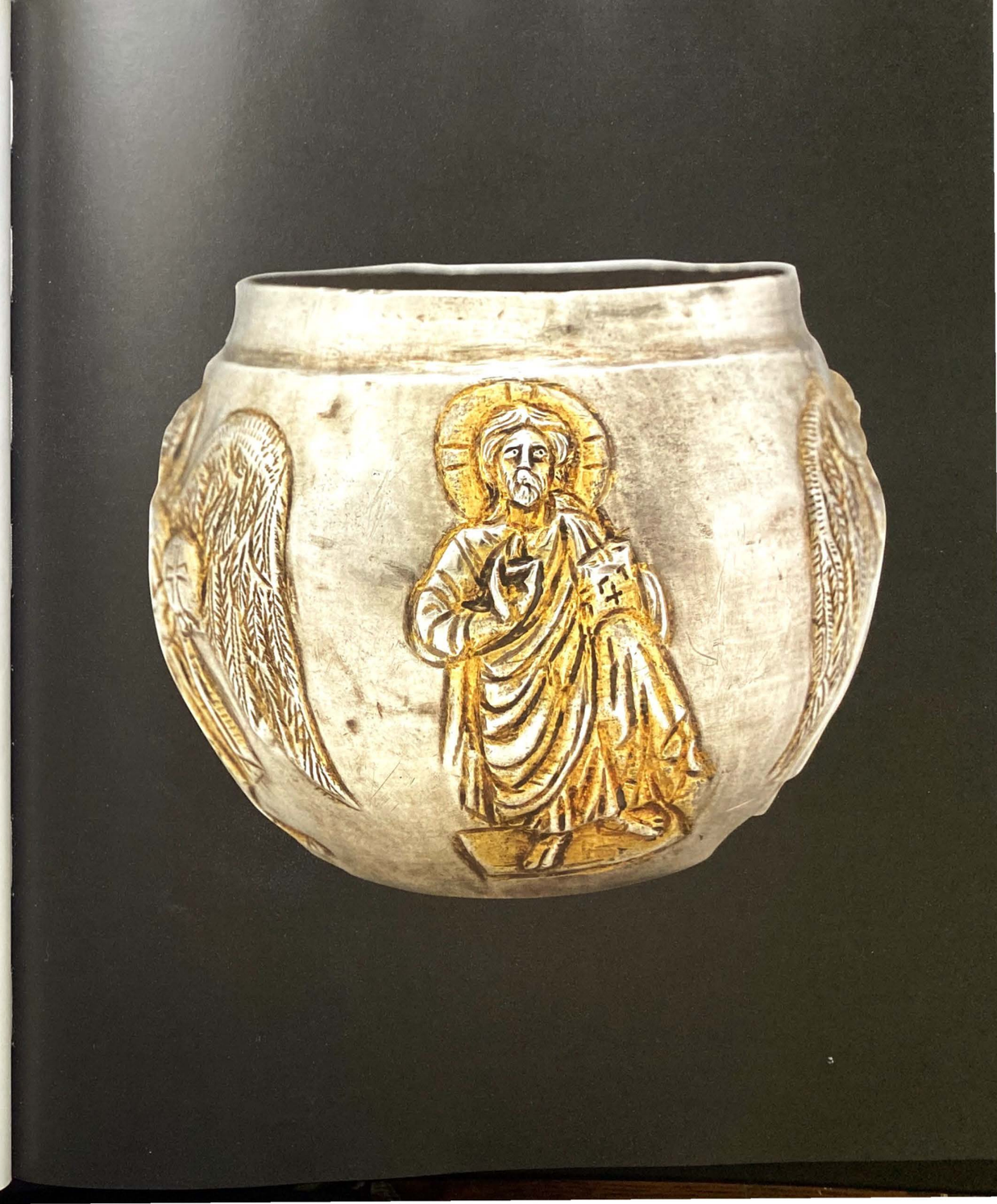
Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 10.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London
1899.0425.3

37
Silver pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels

Eastern Mediterranean (Syria), Early Byzantine period, sixth–seventh century
Silver with gilding, 7 × 9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Gift of George D. and Margo Behrakis in honour of John J. Herrmann, Jr., Curator of Classical Art 1976–2003, 2005.202



38.1, 38.2 ← ↓

Medallion with the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Adoration and the Baptism and a braided chain

Constantinople, late sixth century
Gold, diameter of medallion 7.2 cm; diameter of chain 32.5 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection, BZ.1955.10.1-2

39 →

Amulet

Sixth or seventh century
Gold, diameter 1.95 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 875

40 ↘

A pair of gold earrings

Constantinople (?),
sixth or seventh century
Gold, length 7.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J. 428

41 →

Chain ornament and coin

Constantinople (?),
sixth–seventh century
Gold, length 29 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J. 430

42 ↑

Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 613–629/30
Silver, diameter 36.8 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J 436

43 ↓

Silver plate with cruciform monogram

Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 44.2 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J 435

44 ↑

Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 578–82
Silver with niello inlay,
diameter 26.8 cm

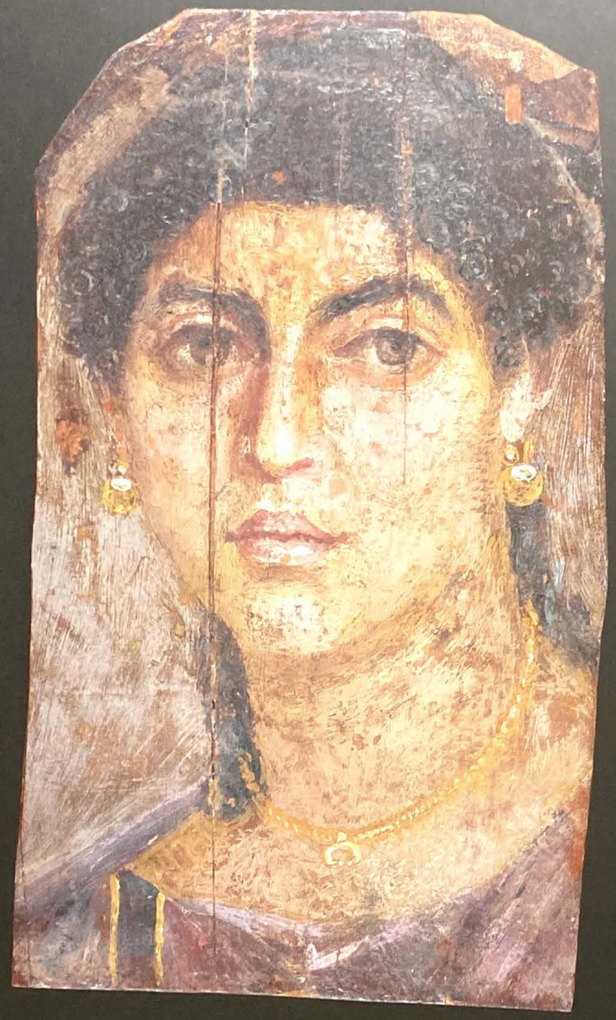
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.1

45 →

Bowl with portrait of a saint

Tarsus (?), 641–51
Silver, niello inlay,
diameter 24.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.2



46
Mummy panel with the portrait of a woman

Hawara, 55–70
Encaustic on thin panel of limewood, 30.5 × 22.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London EA 2366

47
Icon with Virgin and Child

Rome or Constantinople, around 610
Paint on elm, 100 × 47.5 cm

Basilica di Santa Maria ad Martyres-Pantheon, Rome

48

Silk with the Annunciation

Syria (?), *c.* 800
Serge silk in five colours,
33.6 × 68.7 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 61231

49

Gospel according to St Matthew, folio 10*v*

Syria or Palestine,
second half of sixth century
Manuscript on parchment,
30 × 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, suppl. Gr. 1286

50

Psalter with Christ praying and with the Crucifixion and an iconoclast, folio 67*r*

Constantinople, soon after 843
Parchment, 21 × 17.5 cm

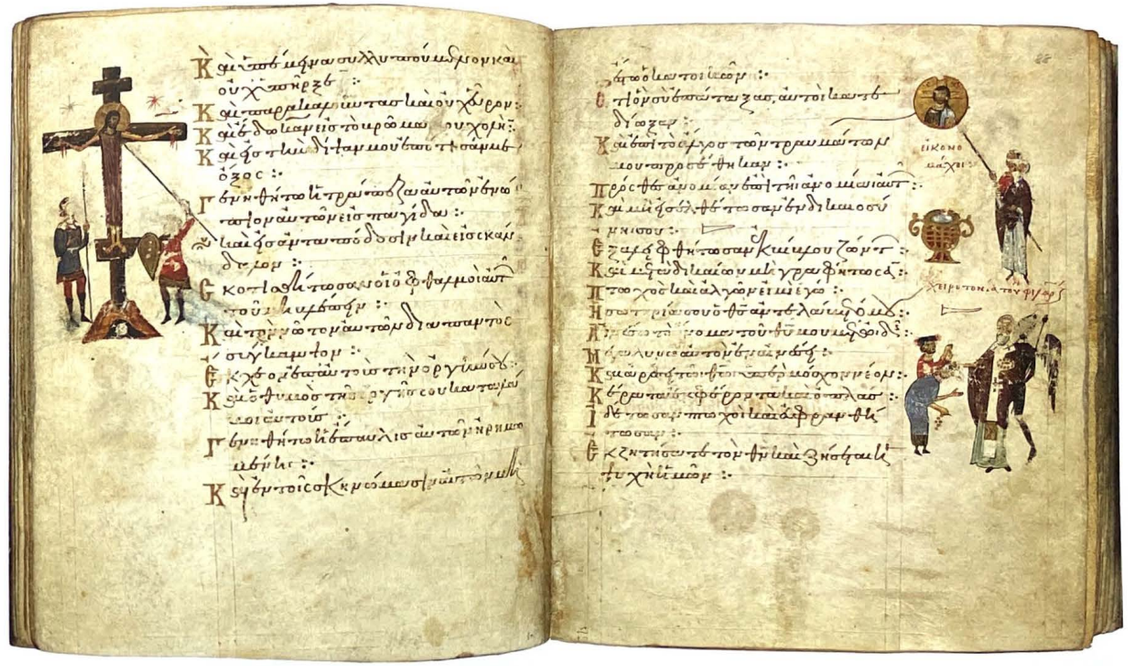
The State Historical Museum, Moscow, GIM 86795 Khlud. 129-d

51

Psalter with Crucifixion, iconoclasts and simoniac priests, folio 87*v*–88*r*

Monastery of St John Stoudios, Constantinople, 1066
Parchment, 24.8 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 19352



52
The Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke

Constantinople (?), early ninth century
Cloisonné enamel, silver, silver-gilt, gold, niello, 10.3 × 7.1 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.715a, b)

53
Pectoral reliquary cross

Probably Constantinople, second half of ninth or tenth century
Gold, niello, wood,
total height 7.2 cm;
outermost cross 4.2 × 3.2 cm;
internal cross 4 × 3 cm;
innermost cross (the relic) 3.7 × 2.7 cm

National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, inv. no. 4882

54
The Beresford
Hope Cross

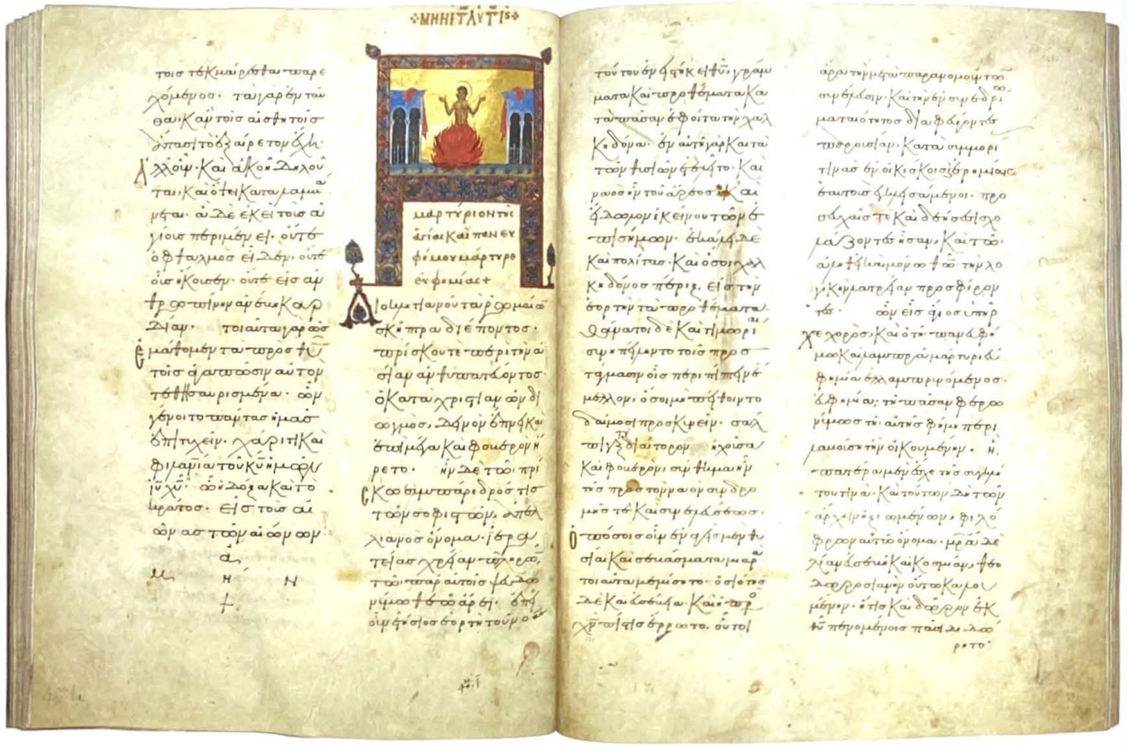
Byzantium, second half
of the ninth century
Gold cloisonné enamel mounted
on silver gilt, 8.7 × 5.8 × 1.8 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 265-1886

55.1–29
Group of Byzantine coins

See pages 391–4 for details; illustrated opposite are cats 55.11 *(above)*, 55.12 *(below)*

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham
The Henry Barber Trust Collection



56
Lives of saints
with St Euphemia, folio
121v–122r

Constantinople, around 1100
Parchment, 44.2 × 35 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 11870

57
Icon with the
Triumph of Orthodoxy

Constantinople (?), second half of
the fourteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 39 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1988.0411.1

3

At Court

ANTHONY CUTLER

Detail of cat.60 ⇐

About the year 1075 a mysterious individual named Kekaumenos, who seems to have been a highly placed military governor, counselled his peers:

> If someone revolts and proclaims himself emperor, do not support his scheme but stand aloof from him … Preserve fealty to the emperor in Constantinople and you won't fail in your expectations … I beseech you … to side with the emperor and to keep serving him, since the emperor who has his court in Constantinople must always win.[1]

More than a moralising plea for loyalty, this piece of advice implies that the reader might take the opposite course and move against the emperor – a possibility frequently realised in the long history of Byzantine conspiracy and usurpation. Both fealty and expectations characterise the nature of those objects that we have, works of art that in one way or another may be associated with the Byzantine court as things emanating from, or presented in, this milieu. As against the long-lost physical environment and decoration of the Great Palace, these things still speak of the pretensions and ambitions of those who made use of them.

The offering and reception of gifts (and titles), and broad suspicion as to the motives underlying such gestures, play a sizeable part in the counsels of Kekaumenos. Both strategies also figure in the mid-tenth-century works known as the *Book of Ceremonies* and *On the Administration of the Empire*, compilations attributed to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59). In these texts it is obvious what is offered and what is received, but in many cases where we have only an object unaccompanied by such specifications, it is difficult to know whether it was a present from or to the emperor. If it is clear that the so-called David Casket in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome (fig.19) was given to the sovereign (and his spouse) – the inscription on the lid, above an image of Christ blessing them and the donors saluting this event, speaks of the 'couple of servants [who] adore as they should, the imperial couple' – it is far from certain whether a dismembered object like the leaf showing Constantine the Great[2] and probably alluding to his tenth-century successor denotes his demonstration of piety before the lost central member of a triptych presented by him or a gift to him celebrating this attitude.

Such problems are inherent in many instances of this sort and telling in the ambiguity they present since they attest to values ideally shared by the ruler and his court. In other words, it is less important whether a piece originated at the emperor's or an aristocrat's behest than that both parties to the artistic transaction participated in a common ideology. Central to this body of thought was the ruler's well-being, for on this depended that of the empire over which he ruled. His longevity, divinely protected physical health and ability to defeat his enemies were seen as concomitants. These beliefs are linked on an ivory diptych, the two parts of which are now divided. On the leaf in Venice (cat.75), as on another in Dresden,[3] SS. John the Theologian and Paul are said in the epigram at the top to protect an emperor Constantine – almost certainly Constantine VII – from harm, while on the partner of the Venice leaf, now in Vienna (cat.74), SS. Andrew and Peter are described as absolving him from his sins. It is interesting to compare Andrew's pacific, oratorical stance – all the figures are depicted in philosophers' garb – with the role assigned to him in the book *On the Administration of the Empire*, in which Constantine attributes a victory over the Slavs to the intervention of 'the invincible and unconquerable warrior and captain and marshal, the triumphant and victorious first-called apostle Andrew'. The difference is explained by the several roles that this multi-talented saint was called upon to play in the mid-tenth century.

A similar complementarity appears when the iconography and inscriptions on a triptych, again in the Palazzo Venezia, are considered (fig.20). On its left wing the legend declares that, with the help of the four martyrs depicted, the ruler (again, most likely Constantine VII) puts his enemies to flight – a sentiment repeated half a century later in a poem on the page facing the portrait of Basil II in his Psalter flanked by icons of military saints (fig.5), where the martyrs shown are described as his 'allies'. But the epigram on the triptych's central member relates Christ's instructions to Mary and John the Baptist, the intercessors for humankind, to release Constantine from all illness, even as He subjects all powers to his earthly representative.[4]

In the inscription on the left wing the emperor is credited with the carving of the martyrs, a familiar topos in which the sponsor of a work is understood to have been its maker. Constantine, indeed, is described in a contemporary text as an artist in his own right and as the 'corrector' of other craftsmen.[5] Yet, even if these skills are mythical, the object as a whole encapsulates the way in which Christian imagery was turned to the benefit of the emperor. This is so in the case of a chalice in Venice[6] – possibly looted by the Latins from the Great Palace or the Church of St Sophia – on the foot of which divine aid is invoked for an emperor Romanos. And on the even more richly gem-studded cross-reliquary at Limburg an der Lahn,[7] sponsored by Basil the *proedros* (a high-ranking civilian dignity), an inscription on the frame asserts that, with the help of the Cross, Constantine (VII) and Romanos (I or II) crush the barbarians as Christ shattered the gates of Hell. Appropriations of this sort are rife on works from the ninth through the twelfth century and, particularly during Constantine's sole reign, occur on icons in a variety of materials. He masquerades as the first emperor of that name, crowned by Christ, in the pose used to depict the Prodromos (Forerunner) as he baptised Christ in the Jordan,[8] on a well-known ivory plaque in Moscow (cat.68); and in the guise of King Abgar receiving the Mandylion on a wood panel at Mount Sinai.[9] Repeatedly, as we shall see, he appears as David in the Paris Psalter (cat.60). But the exploitation of analogies to

Fig. 19
The 'David Casket', end of ninth century. Ivory, 16.1 × 8.4 × 10.3 cm
Palazzo Venezia, Rome

Fig. 20
Triptych with Deisis and saints, mid-tenth century. Ivory, 20.8 × 7.6 cm (left wing); 23.6 × 14.2 cm (central plaque); 20.9 × 6.9 cm (right wing)
Palazzo Venezia, Rome

Fig. 21
Triptych with Crucifixion and saints, mid-tenth century. Ivory, 20.8 × 7.6 cm (left wing); 23.6 × 14.2 cm (central plaque); 20.9 × 6.9 cm (right wing).

Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Fig. 22
The sickbed of King Hezekiah, folio 446*v* of the Paris Psalter, mid-tenth century. Tempera and gold on parchment, 20.3 × 18.1 cm.

Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

Judeo-Christian Antiquity was limited neither to the person nor the time of Constantine VII. This ruler's marriage to Helena, daughter of his predecessor Romanos I (920–44), lent new impetus to the long-established image of Constantine the Great and his mother Helena, who were regarded as archetypal defenders of the faith. They stand together at the foot of the Cross on a magnificent ivory in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (fig.21), thus supplementing the traditional iconography of the Crucifixion represented by the Borradaile triptych (cat.78). If size and excellence in carving are evidence of imperial sponsorship, then the triptych in Paris is just such a creation, most likely from the reign of Romanos II (959–63).[10]

Besides a repository of ancient ideas, the Palace was evidently a storehouse of ancient artefacts, both Christian and secular. These trophies were brought out in their original state, as were the silver 'Iordanes' plate, the 'Likinios' and other minsouria of the fourth to sixth centuries.[11] Near the sickbed of King Hezekiah in the mid-tenth-century Paris Psalter (fig.22) stands a *cherniboxeston* (washing set) with a ewer of fifth- or sixth-century type. More often, early materials were incorporated into new creations, as in the case of the already-mentioned chalice of Romanos, the gadrooned bowl of which is a sardonyx vessel of Late Antique, if not Classical, origin. New life was similarly given to the massive rock crystal known as the 'Grotto of the Virgin' which in Venice, if not earlier in Byzantium, was mounted on a base now understood to be a votive crown of Leo VI (886–912; cat.064) and itself an artefact in which the emperor is presented as *isapostolos*, the equal of the Apostles and Evangelists who surround him.

Between the ninth and the eleventh century the re-employment of ancient hardstones seems to have inspired Byzantine craftsmen to exploit newly mined materials of this sort. Within this time-frame fall an agate paten in Paris,[12] into which was set a central roundel depicting the Last Supper – a scene especially appropriate to the vessel's Eucharistic function – and the much larger alabaster example in Venice (cat.80), at the hub of which a half-length Christ who, in the inscription around him, 'Take, eat, this is my body', gives voice to the liturgical instruction repeated by Orthodox and other priests to this day. One or more of these sumptuous utensils might well have come from a church or chapel in the Great Palace or from St Sophia: the *Book of Ceremonies* (I, chapters 1, 9) describes how, at Pentecost and on other feasts, the emperor laid two chalices and two patens on the altar of the Great Church. The same text tells repeatedly (e.g. at I, Chapter 15) of crowns, chains, silver candelabra, pearl-studded and enamelled book covers and other objects brought in from the treasury and neighbouring churches to adorn the Magnaura and other parts of the palace when ambassadors from abroad were received.

To stress only unique objects in rare materials would be to distort the picture of gifts offered in the palace and to ignore the circumstances of their circulation. More habitual was the presentation of objects like the small silver crosses said in the *Ceremonies* book (I, chapters 19, 22) to have been bestowed by the emperor on a variety of dignitaries in the Church of the Mother of God of the Pharos on the feast of St Elijah and other occasions.

Such presents are probably exemplified by a small silver cross at Dumbarton Oaks (fig.23). On the obverse, around the bust of Christ, appears the plea 'Lord help Romanos the Orthodox emperor', while, on the reverse, the Virgin's aid is invoked for 'Basil the Despot born in the purple'. These nielloed legends make clear that the rulers in question were Romanos II and Basil II, his son and co-emperor between 960 and 963. What the inscriptions do not tell us is recorded in the *Ceremonies* book: these silver crosses were awarded during the same event as the prefect of the treasury and other officials offered to the emperor inlaid gold crosses. The precious-metal symbols were thus elements in a ritual of gift exchange, a sacred compact of allegiances that could stay the flux of loyalties implicit in the advice of Kekaumenos and all too often manifest in the political history of the era.

Readers of the *Book of Ceremonies* might well come away believing that without pomp there was no circumstance, no ritual context surrounding and affecting an object that may reasonably be assumed to have been associated with the palace. Yet in many instances it is difficult to identify surviving vestiges of Byzantine art with activities of the court, first because this text rarely enters into detail about the objects that it mentions; and, second, given its deliberate focus on 'public' events in this setting, because it ignores those things that pertain to relationships between imperial kinsmen and women, tokens exchanged as markers of family solidarity – the most important, and sometimes the most flagrantly withdrawn, sort of allegiance.

One example of such a 'personal' gift is a little-known cross-reliquary kept in the Church of St-Eloi at Eine in Flanders (fig.24). Its cedar obverse, bare except for its gold and enamel tips, represented a particle of the True Cross; its reverse, sheathed in gold, bears an inscription describing this 'branch of Eden' as an offering to the Virgin of 'Maria, born in the purple'. This princess was a daughter of Alexios I Komnenos and Empress Irene Doukaina, who presented a very similar silver-gilt reliquary (now in Venice)[13] to the Kecharitomene in Constantinople, the convent to which both mother and daughter retired after the emperor's death in 1118. Ostensibly devoid of political content, these richly decorated relics proclaimed the piety of their donors, even while the epithet 'purple-born'

Fig. 23
Cross of the Emperors Romanos II and Basil II, 960–63. Silver, 7.4 × 5.9 cm.

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection

applied to Maria Komnene served to offset the fact that her father was a usurper. Clearly, Alexios I, noted for the distribution of particles of the 'Holy Wood' to foreigners and to monasteries overseas,[14] did not exclude members of his own clan.

The Paris Psalter (cat. 60), an exceptionally large and lavishly decorated version of the book that served the Byzantines as a moral and literary primer, may fittingly conclude these remarks on art at court. Quite possibly prepared at the order of Constantine VII for the edification of his son Romanos,[15] the body of the text is surrounded by an elaborate apparatus of patristic and other commentary. But it is the design and content of its fourteen full-page miniatures that best rehearse many of the themes outlined above. Even the ornament in their frames, notably the 'virtual' cabochons that stud the images attached to the Odes of Moses (fol. 149*v*) and Isaiah (fol. 435*v*), echo or anticipate the encrustation of the precious-metal vessels and reliquaries that we have considered, while those of the opening David cycle (fols 1*v*–7*v*) reflect motifs used in mosaic decoration and enamel inlays of the period.

Best known for the personifications of Classical and Christian virtues celebrated in various Byzantine 'Mirrors of Princes' – figures like Ischys (power) in the scene of David's slaughter of the lion and bear, and Praotes (mildness) who attends his anointment by Samuel – the images refer no less directly to relics preserved in the palace, as in the case of the rod that Moses wields as he crosses the Red Sea, an object which was said to have been brought to Constantinople during the reign of Constantine the Great and which, together with the 'sceptres of the Romans' (manifest perhaps in the scene of David's coronation, fol. 6*v*), according to the *Ceremonies* book (II, Chapter 15), was displayed to Arab emissaries visiting the court. Whether or not the final miniature of the ailing Hezekiah (fig. 22), whose life is extended by God acting through the Prophet Isaiah, connotes the illness and absolution of Constantine VII, to which there seems to be an allusion in the epigrams on ivories (cats 74, 75), there is little doubt that a number of objects depicted in the psalter allude to proud possessions of the Great Palace. Today, there are many scholars who reject the picture of a society racked by conspiracy, usurpation and suspicion, attested by Kekaumenos and in the writings of Byzantine chroniclers of life at court. These doubters may well turn for comfort to contemporary works of art, a body of production from which such dysfunctional features are elided or combated with visual strategies darkly concealed within difficult, coded references.

Fig. 24
Cross-reliquary, beginning of twelfth century. Cedar, gold, niello and enamel, 14.2 × 8 cm.
Church of St-Eloi (Sint-Eligius), Ename

58
Icon of the Archangel Michael

Constantinople, twelfth century
Silver gilt on wood, gold cloisonné enamel, precious stones, 46.5 × 35 × 2.7 cm
Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 16

59 ←

Four Gospels, folio 19*v*

Second quarter of the twelfth century, Constantinople
Parchment, 18.6 × 13.7 cm.
I-325 folios

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Cod. Urbin. Gr. 2

60 →

Psalter, folio 1*v*

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Manuscript on parchment,
37 × 26.5 cm

Bibliotheque nationale de France, Paris, Cod. Par. Gr. 139

61 ↠

Lectionary with cruciform text, folio 195*v*–196*r*

Constantinople, twelfth century
Parchment, 38.5 × 29 cm

The British Library, London, Add. Ms. 39603

62 →

Painted and gilded glass bowl

Constantinople, tenth century
Glass, dark violet in colour, gilded and painted, silver gilt and glass cabochons, height 17 cm; diameter 17 cm; total breadth 33 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 83

63 ↓

Fragment of the lower part of a dalmatic

Constantinople, eleventh century
Figured samite 4 lats, twill weave 2 lie 1; silk; white linen sewing thread, 51.3 × 107.5 cm

Musée d'histoire, Sion (propiété du chapitre cathédrale de Sion)

64 →

The Virgin's Grotto

Constantinople-Venice: temple, fourth–fifth century (?); diadem, ninth–tenth century; statuette, thirteenth century
Rock crystal, silver gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, precious stones, pearls, total height 20 cm; diadem diameter 13 cm; height 3.5 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 92

65
Casket

Byzantium, tenth–eleventh centuries, with later alterations
Bone on a wooden core, with brass clasps, 16.1 × 24 × 15.6 cm

Petit Palais, Musee des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, O. Dut. 1273

66
The Veroli Casket

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Ivory and bone on wood core, metal hardware, 11.2 × 40.5 × 16 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 216-1885

67
Carved box with emperors riding and hunting

Tenth or eleventh century
Carved and stained ivory, said to show traces of gilding, with silver (replacement?) lock, hinges and corner reinforcements, 13.4 × 26.4 × 13 cm

Tresor de la Cathédrale de Troyes

68

Ivory with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ

Constantinople, 945
Ivory, 18.6 × 9.5 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv. no. 162

69

Comb

Constantinople,
between 886 and 912
Ivory, 10.3 × 10 × 2 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin,
Skulpturensammlung und Museum für
Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 2006

70

Votive plaque with Christ blessing Emperor Otto II (967–83) and Empress Theophano (982–83)

Ivory, traces of red polychromy,
18.5 × 10.6 cm

Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen-Âge,
Paris, inv. no. CL 392

71 ←

Icon with Virgin and Child

Second half of tenth century
Ivory, 22.4 × 14.2 × 1.1 cm

Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris. O. Dat. 01272

72 →

Ivory panel with the Theotokos Hodegetria

Constantinople, tenth century
Ivory, 25.7 × 13.3 × 1.4 cm

Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht. ABM h1 751

73
Ivory with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, *c.*950 – 1000
Ivory, 33.5 × 11.8 cm

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, M.13-1904

74
Ivory panel with SS. Andrew and Peter

Constantinople, mid-tenth century or 1060s
Ivory, 24.6 × 13.5 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstkammer (B136)

75
Ivory panel with St John the Theologian and St Paul

Constantinople, mid-tenth century or 1060s
Ivory, 24.9 × 13.4 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della Città di Venezia e per il Comuni della Gronda Laguna, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Venice, inv. 19

76

Triptych with Deisis and Saints

Constantinople, *c.*1000
Ivory with traces of gilt,
25.2 × 33 × 2.9 cm (open)

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 62441

77

The 'Harbaville' triptych with Deisis and saints

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Elephant ivory, with traces of gilding and red paint (not original), 24 (max.) × 14.3 (the centre) and 28 cm (open)

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 3247

78

Ivory triptych with Crucifixion and saints (The Borradaile Triptych)

Constantinople, tenth century
Ivory, 27.2 × 15.7 cm (central panel); 7.8 cm (left wing); 8.5 cm (right wing)

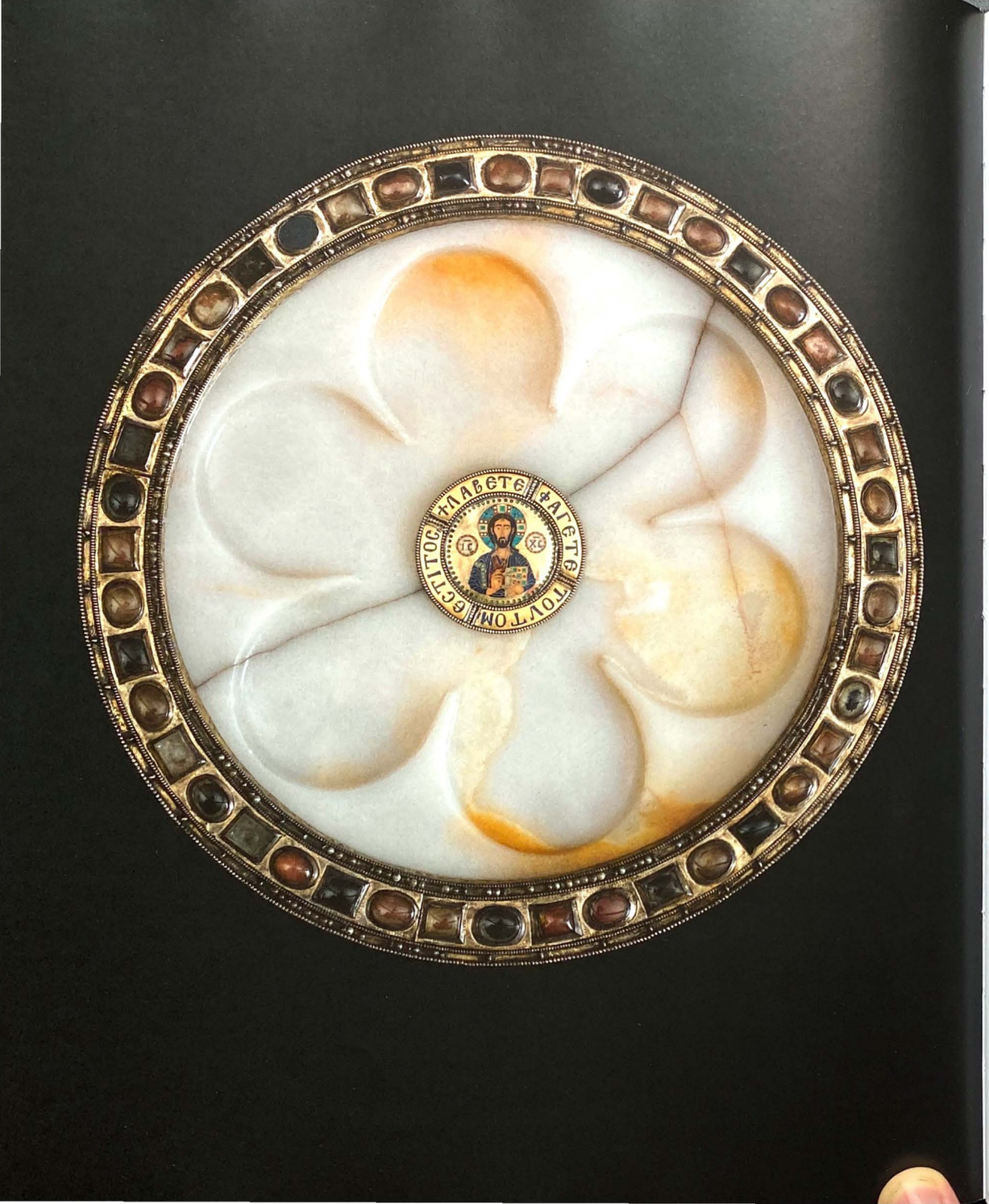
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1923, 12-5, 1

79

Icon with the Koimesis

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century
Steatite, partially gilt, 13 × 11.2 × 1.7 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstkammer (B797)



80

Alabaster paten with Christ

Constantinople, tenth–eleventh century
Alabaster, silver-gilt, rock crystal, pearls, cloisonné enamel, 32 × 32 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, MS 199 Pal

81

Chalice of the Patriarchs

Constantinople, tenth or early eleventh century
Sardonyx (cup); silver-gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, pearls, precious stones and rock crystal cabochons (mount), 27.3 × 18 cm

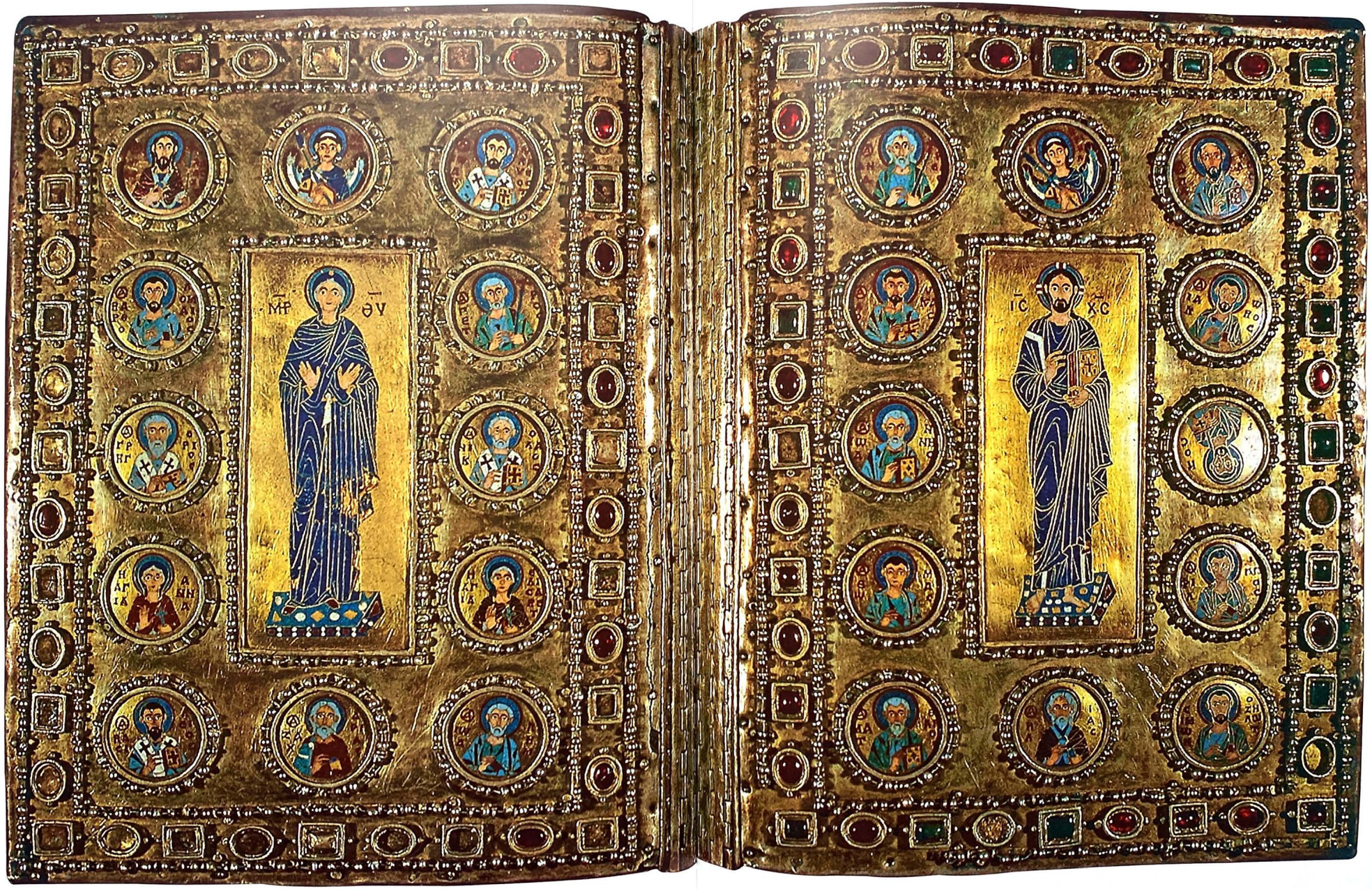
Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 40

82 →

Book covers

Byzantium, late tenth–early eleventh centuries
Gilded silver on wood, with gold cloisonné enamels, pearls and precious stones, 29 × 21 cm

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, MS Lat. Cl. 1.100


ΜΡ ΘΥ
ΙC XC

4

At Home

I *Ceramics of Everyday Life*

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

Detail of cat. 87 ←

IN THE BYZANTINE WORLD, as indeed until quite recently, in the daily life of rich and poor, laymen and clerics, in the city and in the countryside, pottery served basic needs, such as storing and transporting goods – primarily foodstuffs – lighting, and preparing and serving food. The pottery presented here belongs mainly to the category of tableware, and thus this brief introductory essay focuses on these vessels.

In form and technology, the clay table vessels of the Early Byzantine period[1] are the continuation and development of their Roman counterparts. The most popular shape is the shallow plate or bowl, generally of rather large dimensions, indicating use as common vessels for serving dry rather than liquid food.[2] Wine and water were drunk from small deep bowls, similar in shape to the ancient *skyphos*. Closed vases in the form of the wine jug (*oinochoe*) are also associated with drinking.

The form and the size of the domestic vessels provide valuable information about eating habits (fig. 25) and diet in Byzantium, while the way they were decorated, as most were, reveals much about artistic fashions, beliefs and prejudices at the time. Ceramic table vessels intended for household use could be decorated without the need to observe religious constraints and dictates. The decoration on the ceramic table vessels is a good example of secular art aimed at a broad spectrum of Byzantine society.[3]

The spread of Christianity is recorded overtly in the decoration of the clay domestic vessels of the Early Byzantine period. Christian symbols, primarily crosses and Chi-Rho monograms or Christograms, as well as scenes from the Old and New Testaments, and figures of saints,[4] appear as decorative subjects that record the need of the faithful to invoke the presence and protection of the divine in their home.[5]

Fig. 25
This detail of a fourteenth-century wall painting from Mystras, Peribleptos, shows a dinner in progress

The shallow plate and the hemispherical bowl are the most common shapes for table vessels from the Middle Byzantine period, and again are generally of rather large dimensions. Size and form continue to indicate that these vessels were used as common vessels for serving food. However, vessels designed for use by individuals, such as beakers and cups, with and without handles, also exist.[6] New shapes indicate that these vessels had a special purpose. For example, *saltzaria* or *gararia* were vessels that had a heating device for keeping gravy and sauces warm at table. The renowned *garum* was a sauce whose main ingredient was fish blood (fig. 26).[7]

The practice of coating vessels with glaze was an important development in Byzantine tableware. The use of glaze spread gradually from the seventh century onwards[8] and by the twelfth, and especially the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it was commonplace throughout the Byzantine world. In addition to its primary role of waterproofing the porous surface of the clay, glaze also influenced the way Byzantine table vessels looked, as it is shiny, brilliant and enhances the decoration.

With the widespread use of glaze it was possible to produce clay vessels that imitated metal, thus satisfying, in large part, the persistent demand among the emerging middle class for objects made of humble materials to resemble those made of precious ones. In this context, various kinds of decoration developed, such as paint, relief and engraving. One variant of painted decoration was *polychrome*,[9] which was executed in vitreous pigments, such as blue, green, yellow, white, red and black. Black is used on the outlines. Polychrome decoration was applied to vases made of white clay, a practice associated with Constantinople (cat. 96).[10] The polychrome vases overtly imitate vessels made from precious materials with gem-studded rim and decoration in varicoloured enamels.[11]

A significant step in the development of Byzantine tableware was the use, in the late eleventh century, of a whitish slip under the glaze on vases made of red clay.[12] Establishment of this practice was a decisive factor in the development of *sgraffito* decoration, the par excellence decoration of Byzantine ceramics.[13] *Sgraffito* decoration, whose name is derived from the Italian verb *sgraffiare*, meaning to engrave, consists of engraving the slip in such a way as to reveal the red colour of the clay body of the vase. The incised red lines thus form the decorative subject. Byzantine artisans experimented with the whole gamut of *sgraffito* and played with the presence of colour. On the *fine-sgraffito* vases they executed lacy designs (cat. 85), as well as representations of animals (cats 84, 86, 92) and human figures. The similarities between these representations and those on metal vessels[14] are remarkable not only in the affinity of the subjects but also in the rendering of details, such as the dots and the imbrications in the field of the scenes. On the Corinth vase (cat. 87), an example of *Measles Ware*, the *fine-sgraffito* decoration is enlivened by dots of red slip, while on cat. 83 the finely engraved decoration is accompanied by painted motifs in green and purplish brown.

Vessels decorated with the *incised-sgraffito* technique feature not only birds (cat. 91) and other animals but also scenes with warriors,[15] who are identified as the *akrites*, the guardian-heroes of the Byzantine marchlands, as well as musicians and dancers.[16]

On the vases with *champlevé* decoration, the slip is excised from the ground of the representations so that the figures remain light against the dark red clay, in a charming contrast between the light and dark surfaces (cats 88, 94, 95).

After the thirteenth century, the number of glazed vessels found in excavations increases, pointing to their use by a wider section of the population. They are mainly small shallow bowls, suitable for individual use and for a diet rich in liquid foods, such as broths and soups.[17] The *sgraffito* decoration of Late Byzantine vases is enlivened usually under an overlying orange transparent glaze (cat. 97) or is variegated with brush strokes of brownish yellow and green paint, prepared from oxides of iron and copper respectively (cats 93, 258).[18] Glazed vessels with slip-painted decoration are also among the finds dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (cat. 89).

It is noteworthy that the ceramic workshops, which were decentralised in this period, began to produce works on a wide range of themes.[19] The works they created had their own subjects and motifs, influenced by local events and conditions. This is particularly evident in the regions under Latin rule, such as Cyprus, whose decorative subjects on the glazed vessels – although they retained the transparent lead glazes and the *sgraffito* decoration of Byzantine ceramics – were influenced by the Crusader world of the East (cat. 257). Coats of arms, knights and noblewomen appear frequently on Cypriot glazed vases of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, giving their owners a sense of luxury and nobility.[20]

Fig. 26
Saltzario with lid, tenth century. Glazed ceramic, height 12 cm

23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 6260 a, b

Fig. 27
Plate, twelfth century. Silver and gold, diameter 27.5 cm; depth 4.7 cm

On display at the Benaki Museum, Athens

83
Glazed large bowl with a representation of a bird

Second half of the twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 10 cm; diameter 27 cm; diameter of the base 10.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13556

84 →
Plate with lion attacking a deer

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 4.6 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 13.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A.18 (406)

85 ↠
Large bowl

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 8.3 cm; diameter 24.5 cm; diameter of base 11.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A.2 (683)

86 →
Plate with lioness

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 2.4 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 14.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A. 33 (493)

87 ↘
Plate with siren on a bird

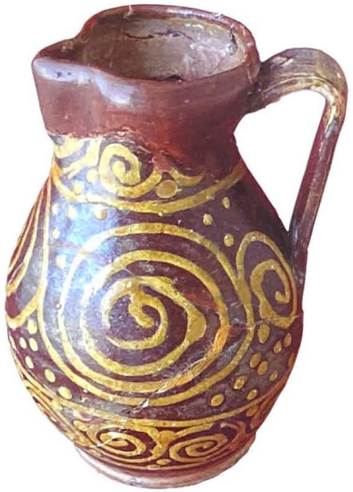
Corinth, mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height approx. 7.7 cm; diameter 20.6 cm; diameter of base 6.6 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. c-31-05

88 ↠
Plate with a deer and other animals

Corinth, Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1180–1200
Glazed ceramic, height 4 cm; diameter 22.9 cm; diameter of base 12.4 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. c-1929-003



89 ←

Jug with trefoil mouth

Arta, fourteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 22 cm; diameter of base 11 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Ioannina Byzantine Museum, Paregoritissa Archaeological Collection, inv. no. AK 350

90 ↖

Fish-shaped perfume flask

Egypt, fifth–sixth centuries
Copper alloy, cast, engraved, 14.8 × 8.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11528

91 →

Bowl with bird

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 4.8 cm; diameter 14 cm; diameter of base 6.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Thebes, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. 1st EBA 1943

92 ↘

Bowl with fish

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 5.4 cm; diameter 11.5 cm; diameter of base 5.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Prefecture of Boeotia, Thebes, inv. no. 1st EBA 1944

93 ↠

Glazed bowl with a representation of a dancer

Cyprus, Paphos area, first half of the thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 7.4 cm; diameter 15.3 cm; diameter of base 7.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13609

94
Plate with two lovers in a garden

Corinth or Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1200–30
Glazed ceramic, height 4.5 cm; diameter 25.3 cm; diameter of base 11.1 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. C-1934-0054

95 →
Plate with animal

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 5.6 cm; diameter 21 cm; diameter of base 9.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Akraiphnio, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. ΒΧΜ 1331

96 ↓
Glazed small four-lobe bowl with a representation of a bird

Constantinople, eleventh century
Glazed ceramic, height 8.7 cm; diameter 13 cm; diameter of base 5.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13573

97 ↘
Glazed small bowl with a representation of a double-headed eagle

Late thirteenth or fourteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 7 cm; diameter 12 cm; diameter of base 4.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13591

4

At Home

2 *Metalwork of Everyday Life*

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

Detail of cat.103 ⇐

Home life in Byzantium must have differed greatly between the wealthy and the poor, both in the living space and in the decorative possessions and practical utensils. As usual in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, we know far more about the lifestyle of the rich than the indigent. Privileged households in Byzantium were furnished with vessels in silver and in ivory or bone, in addition to those in baser metals, glass and pottery. While the silver in the exhibition comes from five caches or treasures of silver plate ranging in date from the fourth to the eleventh or twelfth centuries, the two medieval ivory and bone caskets were preserved on their own. Each silver treasure, concealed in the past for safekeeping and never retrieved by its owner, is composed of different types of objects which vary by chance of selection and survival. The contents of the treasures suggest the range of domestic objects available in silver in the Byzantine period.

The earliest piece of silver in the exhibition is the Projecta Casket (cat.12) from the Esquiline treasure of the fourth century, found in Rome. This treasure has a wide assortment of silver objects – two caskets, small plates and dishes, two wash basins, a flask, a ewer, two amphoras, spoons, chair ornaments (cat.10.1–3), horse trappings – as well as a silver inlaid bronze ewer shaped as a female head, but it lacks larger serving plates of the type that appears in other treasures. Contemporary with the Projecta Casket is the ewer (cat.114) that belongs to a collection of silver found outside the Roman Empire, at Traprain in Scotland. This find contains more than 100 pieces of *Hacksilber,* namely silver cut into pieces for its bullion value, and appears to comprise more than one set of looted domestic silver of the late fourth and early fifth centuries (five decorated flasks or ewers, large plates, at least 50 bowls and basins, goblets and spoons). At the other end of the Late Antique period are the Cyprus and Mytilene treasures, from which eight plates (cats 30, 31, 32, 42, 43, 44, 105, 106), five spoons (cats 101, 102, 107, 108, 109) and the handled wash basin (cat.104) are exhibited here. Both treasures contain objects with control stamps, dating them to the sixth and seventh centuries.[1] According to these stamps, the Cyprus treasure (nine plates illustrating a cycle of David; six serving plates, bowl, censer, sets of spoons) was formed between 578 and 651, while the Mytilene treasure (four serving plates, two basins, ewer, lampstand, lamp, spoons) was perhaps acquired as a complete set some time between 610 and 630.

Complementing all this Late Antique silver are ten plates of the eleventh or twelfth centuries (fig.29) that form part of a treasure of unknown provenance, which has recently come to light.[2] In contrast to the numerous sets of domestic silver recovered from the earlier period, few comparable finds date to medieval Byzantium. But objects surviving from both periods suggest a continuous tradition of production and use. Medieval texts refer to secular silver services used in that period, from the imperial palace down.[3]

Viewed together, the extant silver reflects the diversity of a refined industry and the public demand that it served. Despite the elaborate decoration of some domestic pieces, some localised wear indicates that silver was not just for display but put to use.[4] The plates and spoons seen here (cats 42–44, 101, 102, 105–109) were *argentum escarium*, part of a dinner service. The medieval plates mentioned above belong to a set of ten, eight of which stack together, making them highly portable objects suited to a military campaign or journey.[5] The handled basin and the ewer (cats 104, 114) may have been used at table for hand washing or elsewhere in the household. Alternatively, the ewer may have formed part of *argentum potorium*, a drinking service. The decoration of the silver casket (cat.12) shows that it was carried to the bath together with other items, which include a *situla* (a bucket), a type known elsewhere in silver (fig.28) and shown here in brass (cat.98). The silver appearing here is supplemented by two ivory/bone caskets (cats 65, 66) from the Middle Byzantine period, whose specific use is unknown. These two casket types are characterised by flat and sloping lids respectively, the former continuing the general shape of the Projecta Casket.

Decorative themes can relate to function or reflect the taste or status of the owner. Personal monograms appear on silver plates and spoons (cats 43, 99). On all the objects – early and medieval – we see a mix of secular and decorative, mythological and Christian. Scenes relating to the hunt may be mythological or contemporary. Some argue that Classical themes reflect the owner's traditional (pagan) education (*paideia*).[6] Our interpretation of the owner's choice of decoration should ideally view each object within the broader context of its treasure. Aphrodite/Venus and mythical aquatic figures appear on both the Projecta Casket and the Mytilene basin, linking concepts of beauty, water and the bath. The front of the Projecta Casket juxtaposes portraits of Venus and the casket's owner, while its back shows the owner approaching a bath building. On the Mytilene basin, used for washing, Aphrodite stands above the head of Poseidon. On one of the three medieval plates discussed here, the personification of the Sea (Thalassa) adorns the centre. Rather than a reference to bathing, Thalassa may here allude to the titled owner's career (perhaps a naval one?); two matching plates within the treasure portray equestrian figures, one military, the other engaged in hunting (fig.29), and these are possibly also personal references. It is interesting to note that the most developed mythological repertory seen here is late, being on the ivory Veroli Casket of the tenth century (cat.66), while the slightly later Duthuit Casket (cat.65) illustrates Heracles among scenes of mythical animal combat. Likewise, animals appear on the earlier Cyprus treasure spoons of the seventh century (cats 101, 102). The spoons with panther and lion, seen here, belong to a set which would originally have numbered twelve, each bearing a different running animal (ram, griffin, hare, tiger, stag, bear, horse, boar, bull), all of which feature elsewhere in hunting or pastoral scenes popular in Late Antiquity, on other silver spoons (cats 99, 100) and plates such as that with the goatherd (cat.33) and the brass bucket with hunting scenes (cat.98).

The David plates (cats 30, 31, 32) represent the most developed use of Old Testament iconography on silver, to convey a message that is both Christian and political. The Christian images on the Traprain ewer (cat. 114) include the mix of Old and New Testament scenes characteristic of numerous gold glass bowls whose inscriptions allude to drinking, pointing perhaps to a drinking rather than a washing function for the ewer. The cross in the centre of the Cyprus and Mytilene plates (cats 42, 44, 105, 106) relates in its position and form to earlier central motifs on serving plates, particularly those with monograms which eventually become cruciform (cat.43). Occasionally, mythological and Christian images are combined either on the same object, as on the Projecta Casket, where Venus appears not far from the Chi Rho of the dedicatory inscription; or within the same treasure, as on the plates (with cross) and wash basin (with Aphrodite) of the Mytilene treasure (cats 104, 105, 106) whose control stamps indicate that they were made and acquired together. Such a mix of traditions is characteristic of Late Antiquity.

Fig. 28
Situla with mythological decoration, part of the Concesti treasure, fifth century. Silver, height 22.5 cm

The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 2160/2

Fig. 29
Plate with mounted hunter, part of a set of silver that belonged to Constantine the Alan, *proedros*, eleventh or twelfth century. Silver, diameter 29 cm

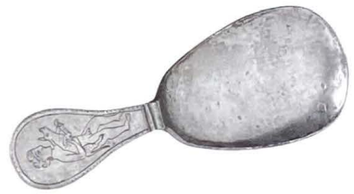
On display at the Benaki Museum, Athens

98 ←

Bucket

Eastern Mediterranean,
sixth century
Hammered, chased and punched
brass, height, including handle;
21 cm, diameter 17.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 12553



99 ←

Spoon with inscription

Byzantium, early seventh century
Beaten silver, turned (the handle)
and nielloed (monogram and
inscription), 24.9 × 3.9 cm; bowl
diameter 1.9 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la
Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2394

100 ←

Spoon with flat handle

Byzantium, sixth century (?)
Silver, 14.6 × 5.3 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la
Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2399

101, 102 ←

Two spoons decorated
with a panther and a lion

Constantinople (?), seventh century
Silver, length 25.8 cm (panther);
length 25.7 cm (lion)

The Trustees of the British Museum, London,
1899.0425.25, 1899.0425.18

103 →

Sword

Constantinople or Thessaloniki,
fourteenth or first half of the
fifteenth century
Steel, forging, engraving,
length 111 cm

Museum of Applied Art,
Belgrade, MAA inv. no. 1120

104 ↓

Bowl (*trulla*) with Aphrodite

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, height 7.3 cm; diameter 16.5 cm; length with handle 31.3 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 899

105 ↓

Plate

Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 15.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 893

106 →

Plate

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, diameter 25.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 896

107, 108, 109

Three spoons

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, length 22 cm;
length 25.5 cm; length 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 901, BXM 905, BXM 908

110 ↑

Bracelet

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, diameter 5.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 888

111 ↗

Buckle

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, length 5.4 cm; width of buckle plate 1.8 cm; diameter of hoop 2.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 881

112 →

Seal

Constantinople, 610–25
Bronze, base 5.7 × 5.7 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 909

113.1 ↘

Solidi

Constantinople, 602–10
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 910

113.2 →

Solidi

Constantinople, 610–41
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 911

114 ←

Ewer with biblical scenes

Rome (?), late fourth century
Silver-gilt, 21.3 × 8.7 cm

Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland, GVA 1

115 ↓

Silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora

Constantinople, between 11 January 1055 and 31 August 1056
Silver, gilt, niello, diameter 3.28 cm; weight 32.96 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1952.5-1.1

116 →

One-pound commodity weight with two emperors

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century

Leaded brass, 6.9 × 6.2 cm; weight 323.76 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1863.12-28.1

117 ↘

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century
Leaded brass, 5.6 × 5.8 cm; weight 318.11g

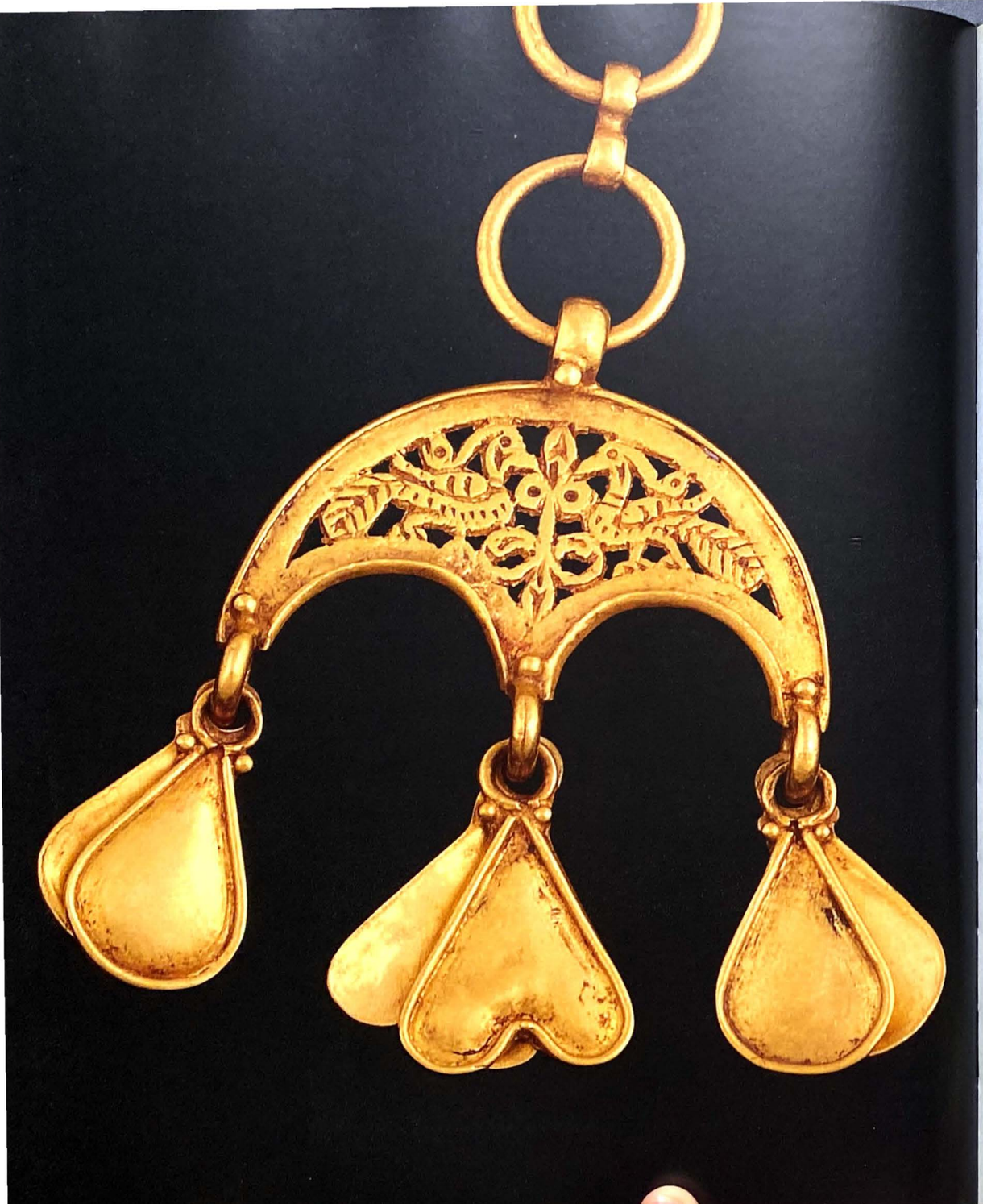
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1980.6-1.3

118 ↓

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century
Gunmetal, 6.7 × 6.1 cm; weight 323.71 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1980.6-1



4

At Home

3 *Jewellery and Adornment*

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

Detail of cat.130 ⇐

A deeper understanding of the character of Byzantine goldwork, as well as silverwork, is predicated on seeking the source of its inspiration and its roots in Hellenistic art. In such centres as Antioch and Alexandria, the Greek language, Greek education and Greek art were kept alive and cultivated assiduously, even after Roman domination, primarily in the higher echelons of society. Although the Roman conquerors imposed administrative reforms, introduced new manners and habits, and applied architectural and technical achievements, they continued to draw on Greek thought as the characteristics of Hellenistic tradition and art passed into the Early Christian period.

During the third century, certain particularities appeared in goldwork, in response to the demand for luxury during a period of severe economic crisis. The *opus interrasile* or pierced-work (*diatrita*) technique[1] is one technically and aesthetically special way of combining the necessary economy in the use of gold with the desired variety and vitality in the lacy surface of the jewellery. Early examples of this technique in the third century are mainly mounts for coins, either as necklace pendants or pectorals (*enkolpia*), which feature patterns with Greek motifs, such as palmettes, spirals and guilloches.[2] These types of medallions have been found over a very wide area, from France and England to the Eastern Mediterranean, revealing the existence of these elements in Roman goldwork.

The medallions of Constantine the Great (cat.128), which are representative of the new trends in the art of this period, combine the heavy style of the late imperial effigies with the finely executed pierced-work surface of the mounts, eminently suited to the interplay of matter and light, as a substitute for the polychromy of Roman jewellery. Finds such as the Hoxne treasure of Roman gold and silver coins, jewellery and silverware (cat.131) attest to the widespread application of pierced-work technique.

In the fifth and sixth centuries there was a notable development in the techniques applied on diverse pieces of jewellery, with more imaginative shapes and polychrome decoration enriched with precious stones, a product of the flourishing trade with the East. At the same time, the subjects used in gold jewellery display a wealth of inspiration and a perfection of execution, contributing to the remarkably mature rendering of each one of these important works of art.

Pieces such as the pair of gold bracelets from the Benaki Museum, Athens (cat.139) herald the jewellery depicted in the Ravenna mosaics, in a faithful representation of popular types (fig.30). The wide lunate necklace with pendent stones, worn by Theodora, recalls in its shape and coloration the necklace with eleven trapezoidal plaques forming a crescent (cat.121). The necklace with stone cabochons worn by the empress is a type that is repeated in necklaces such as cats 123 and 124 and others. By the same token, the bracelet worn by a girl in the empress's retinue is fashioned from a broad band with round catch-plate, as on certain bracelets (cats 140, 142 and 143), each of which represents a characteristic type. Finally, the fibulae that hold in place the chitons of the men in the entourage are indispensable accessories of the uniform of high officials (cat.134).

In the period that followed, and until the reign of Herakleios, the trend seems to have been towards heavier jewellery, such as the gold breast-chain in the British Museum (cat.126), in which, moreover, the subjects are rendered with particular clarity and, although the workmanship is less refined, there is perfect attention to detail. Motifs of Hellenistic origin continue to have precedence in the choices of decoration, while the very wide diffusion of the prevailing types to all coasts of the Mediterranean corroborates the attribution of inspiration to Constantinople, a centre whose influence on the artistic currents of the age radiated far and wide.

The hoards,[3] hidden for safekeeping and found throughout the Eastern Mediterranean – scattered from Constantinople, Mersine in Russia, Assiut in Egypt (cats 121, 127), Lambousa in Cyprus (cats 36, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45), Mytilene in Greece (cats 130, 137), or Rome – provide useful information. They share common motifs, while accompanying finds such as coins and silver assay marks give chronological data, as well as projecting an exceptional sense of quality and luxury.

Towards the end of the seventh century, certain types of jewellery were produced on an impressive scale. Examples include the lunate earrings with pierced-work representations of confronted birds flanking a cross, a tree or a fountain (cats 157, 158). The presence of this heraldic and symbolic scene in all artistic genres – sculpture, painting and diverse minor arts – shows among other things the direct relation of jewellery to great art in the powerful presence of Christian symbolisms.

The Persian Wars, the destruction of hitherto flourishing cities, the Arab conquests, the slump in trade and the turmoil of iconoclasm were all contributory factors to the more general crisis in art and the consequent recession in jewellery production. The absence of finds with traits that can be associated with the eighth century and the beginning of the ninth underlines the hiatus prior to the ascent of the Macedonian dynasty. However, the general revival and heyday that immediately followed had its effect on jewellery as well. Polychromy was now achieved by compositions in enamel. At first, as can be seen on the bracelet from Thessaloniki (cat.141), the penchant for floral decoration with the interpolation of birds continued, but theological subjects soon held sway almost exclusively and jewellery took on the role of amulet (cat. 201), in which technique and thematic repertoire follow the applications of enamelling in larger works, such as Gospel-book covers (cat. 82), cross-reliquaries, chalices or icons.[4] In parallel, amulets

Fig. 30
A sixth-century mosaic showing Empress Theodora and her retinue.
San Vitale, Ravenna

with representations of Christ, the Virgin and religious scenes were carved in stones, sometimes as luxurious pieces of jewellery, sometimes as items for everyday wear (cat.200).

One exception to the strictly Christian thematic repertoire is the crown of Constantine Monomachos, on which, as a typical element of the revival of some Hellenistic memory, besides the empresses Zoe and Theodora, two dancing girls and personifications of Truth and Humility are represented alongside the emperor, who ruled from 1042 to 1055. Together with the crown[5] that Emperor Michael VII Doukas presented as a gift to King Géza I of Hungary, which features effigies of both monarchs with Christ and Archangels, these pieces highlight the role played by jewellery of this calibre in Byzantine diplomacy.

After the tenth century, the use of pierced-work technique to variegate the gold surface of jewellery was ousted by filigree, in which the decorative motifs are executed in fine twisted wire. Filigree combined with granulation (cat.272) held sway in the ensuing centuries and continued to be applied in post-Byzantine creations in the minor arts. Examples of jewellery with filigree decoration are the earrings (cat.283) and the bracelets (cats 273, 274) from the Markova Varoš hoard, which once again bespeak their wide diffusion in the Eastern Mediterranean region. Niello is yet another decorative medium that was employed in Byzantine works in the minor arts, primarily on silver vessels, from the earliest years. It was used alongside enamel to represent Christological scenes on crosses and amulets, such as the cross from Pliska (cat.53).

After the Sack of Constantinople in 1204, defence of the state and political rivalries were the overriding concerns. With the regaining of the capital in 1261, the palace, churches and monuments were renovated and refurbished. Painting enjoyed a new floruit, with distinctive characteristics. By contrast, important Palaiologan works in the minor arts have not survived. Due to the combination of dire economic straits and successive pillaging, which came in the wake of the sack, it is not possible to trace a conscious path of development in jewellery during the final phase of the empire.

Nevertheless, in images not only of emperors but also of ordinary people (fig.31), aesthetically and technically exquisite pieces of jewellery continue to appear. Finally, the fact that after the fall of the Byzantine Empire, in Greece mainly as well as in Asia Minor, significant jewellery continued to be produced,[6] whose value lies in its technical and aesthetic excellence rather than in the sumptuousness of the materials, suggests that jewellery from the Palaiologan period was not as austere as it appears from the surviving examples.

Fig. 31
A fourteenth-century fresco showing the Marriage at Cana.

St Nicholas Orphanou, Thessaloniki

119

Gold pendant

Eastern Mediterranean or southern Baltic, Early Byzantine, sixth-seventh century
Gold foil, gilt copper-alloy pins, diameter 9.5 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Purchase, the Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 66.76

120 ←

Necklace

c. 330–350
Gold, precious stones (twelve missing), 12.8 × 22.8 cm; plaques 2.6 × 2.2 cm

N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens, inv. no. Z 1361

121 ↖

The Berlin Collar

Second half of the sixth or first half of the seventh century
Gold, emeralds, sapphires, one amethyst, pearls, diameter 23 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30269, 305

122 →

Necklace

Constantinople (?), seventh century
Gold, length 53.5; diameter of medallions 2.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. 1959/X-9/1

123 ←

Necklace

Antinoe, Egypt, fifth century
Gold with sapphires, amethysts, emeralds and pearls, length 42.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1778

124 ↓

Chain necklace

Byzantium, sixth–seventh century
Gold and semi-precious stones, length 45.7 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 54.514

125 →

Gold necklace with sapphires and emeralds

Probably Constantinople, late sixth–early seventh century
Gold, emerald, sapphire, sardonyx, pearls, length 79 cm

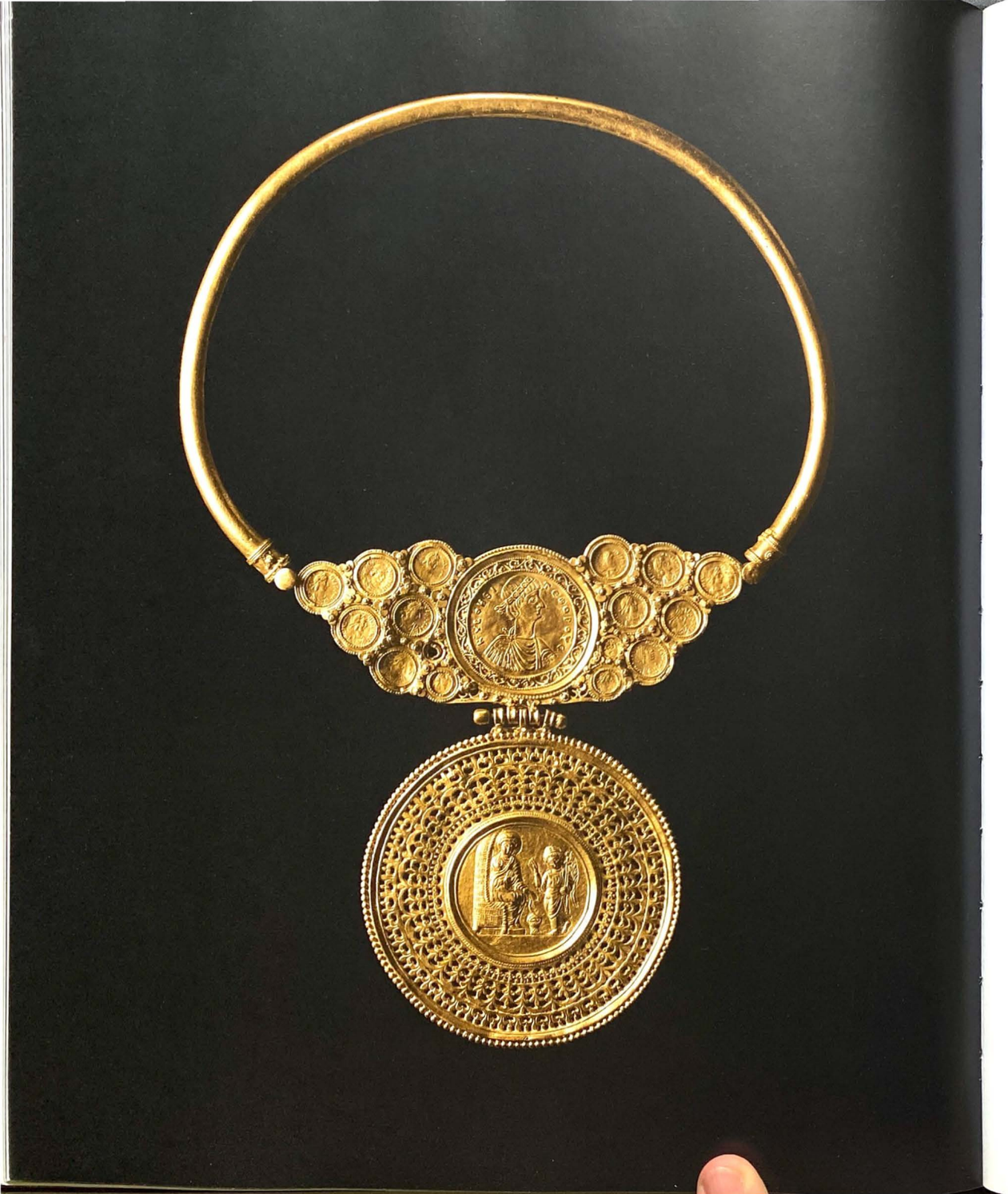
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30219, 5081b

126 →

Gold body-chain

Byzantine, sixth–early seventh century AD
Gold, length 72 cm; diameter of large medallions 7.78 cm; weight 643.2 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1916.7-4.1



127

Gold necklace with pendant

Probably Egypt, late sixth–early seventh century

Gold, diameter of necklace 23.5 cm; height of pendant 11.7 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30219, 506/5061

128 ↙

Gold coin-set pendant

Eastern Mediterranean (?), mid- to late fourth century AD

Gold, diameter 9.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1984.5-1.1

129 ↑

Gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints

Egypt (?), 600–50

Gold, 8 × 5.3 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection, BZ 1937.24

130
Chain

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, length of chain 91 cm; length of pendant 2.3 cm; width 3.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 8759

131
Gold body-chain

Gallo-Roman, late fourth century
Gold, amethyst, garnet, length of individual chains, 37–8 cm; weight 249.5 g.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1994.4-8.1

132 ←
Gold belt-buckle
Constantinople, seventh century
Gold, length 7.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1980.7-8.1

133 ↖
Gold strap-end
Constantinople, seventh century
Gold, 3 × 2.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1982.5-7.1

134
Crossbow fibula
Constantinople (?), *c.* 480
Gold, 11.9 × 5.5 × 4 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995 (1995.97)

135 ←
Bracelet
Eleventh–twelfth century
Silver, repoussé, chased, traces of gilding, niello, 2.2 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11458

136 ←
Bracelet
Eleventh century
Silver, repoussé, chased, partial gilding, niello, 3.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11457

137 ↙
Bracelets
Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, diameter 5.5–6.1 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm; diameter 5.5–6.05 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 882, BXM 883

138 →
Pair of bracelets
Fourth or early fifth century
Gold with sapphires and emeralds, diameter 8.5–11.6 cm; diameter 8.7–11.4 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 67 52.31.1/2

139 →
Pair of bracelets
Cyprus (?), sixth century
Gold, diameter 9 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 1835–1836

140 ↘
Bracelet
Rome (?), fifth century
Gold, 6.8 × 5.9 × 4.6 cm, strap 15.5 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1668)

(Only one of the illustrated pair is exhibited)

141 ↓
Bracelet

Probably from Constantinople,
ninth or tenth centuries
Gold and glass, 5.7 × 8.6 × 6.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, BKO 262/6a

142 ↑
Bracelet

Constantinople (?), sixth-
seventh century
Gold, silver, pearls, amethysts,
sapphires, glass, quartz and
emerald plasma, diameter 8.2 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1670)

143 ↓
Gold bracelet with a bust of the Mother of God

Eastern Mediterranean, *c.* AD 600
Gold, depth of hoop 6.7 cm;
depth of medallion 4.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 351

144 ↓
Gold openwork bracelet

Eastern Mediterranean, fourth
century
Gold, diameter 10 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30210, 509

145
Pectoral cross
Thirteenth–fourteenth century
Gold, lapis lazuli, 4 × 0.7 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1853

146 →
Gold ring with *opus interrasile* decoration
Rome, around 300
Gold, diameter 2 cm
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1917.05-1.987

147 →
Finger ring with the Annunciation
Sixth or seventh century
Gold and niello, diameter 1.6 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1830

148 →
Finger ring with monogram and eagle device
Sixth or seventh century
Gold, diameter 2.5 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1829

149 →
Finger ring with swivel bezel
Sixth–seventh century
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2107

150 →
Gold and niello marriage-ring
Eastern Mediterranean, sixth or seventh century
Gold, niello, diameter of hoop 2.3 cm; diameter of bezel 1.8 cm
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 231

151 →
Gold ring with monogram
Constantinople (?), thirteenth–fifteenth century
Gold, diameter 2.65 cm; length of bezel 1.13 cm
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 271

152 →
Finger ring
Fourteenth century
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11839

153 ←
Earrings
Fourth century
Gold and glass paste with emeralds and cornelians, height 4.2 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1672

154 ↙
Earrings
Antinoe, Egypt, fifth century
Gold with sapphires and pearls, height 9 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1779

155 ↓
Earrings
Fifth–sixth century
Gold with sapphires, pearls and glass, height 9.7 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1807

156 ↘
Gold earring with pearls and enamel
Eastern Mediterranean, tenth or eleventh century
Gold, with pearls and enamel, height 6.6 × 3.3 cm
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1983.5-2.1

157 →
Earrings
Seventh century
Gold, height 4.4 cm
Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1810

158 ↘
Earrings
Constantinople (?), seventh or eighth century
Gold, 6.8 cm
The Paul and Alexandra Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11227 a-b

159 →

Tapestry shawl with vase and vine with figures

Egypt, fourth or fifth century
Linen and wool, 23 × 17.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7127

160 ↓

Resist-dyed panel showing the Nativity

Fifth–sixth century
Dyed linen, 47 × 95.5 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

161

Fragment of a shawl

Egypt, Fayum, ninth–tenth century
Wool with tapestry bands of wool and linen, 74 × 91.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13608

162

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, late tenth–twelfth century
Bone, carved and black organic material, 15.6 × 6.2 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10738

163

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, tenth–twelfth century
Bone, carved and black organic material, 11.2 × 2.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10741

164

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, ninth–eleventh century
Bone, carved and black pigment, 16 × 4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10739

165

Child's tunic with a hood

Egypt, sixth–eighth century
Wool, 63 × 83 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7160

166

Pair of child's sandals

Egypt, fifth–seventh centuries
Stamped leather, 12.8 × 5.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 21839

167 ←

Comb with personifications of Rome and Constantinople

Alexandria (?), second half of the sixth century
Ivory, 16.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10287

168 ↓

Comb with marine deities

Alexandria (?), sixth century
Ivory, 14.5 × 8.25 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10286

169

Small amphora

Egypt, fifth century
Copper alloy cast in parts, with incised and punched decoration, height 22.2 cm; side of base 8.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11602

5

At Church

LIZ JAMES

Detail of cat. 175 ⇐

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH was at the centre of Byzantine life.[1] Across the empire, Orthodoxy united people otherwise unconnected by language, ethnicity or culture. It was a shared identity: an Orthodox believer from Constantinople could enter an Orthodox church in Kiev or Alexandria or Sicily and immediately feel at home; a mosque or a Western church were both equally alien. As Gregory Melissenos, the confessor to Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, put it: 'When I enter a Latin church, I do not revere any of the saints who are there because I do not recognise them.'[2] Everyone was involved in religion in some way, whether as Orthodox, heretic or unbeliever. Religious disputes over the right ways to conceive of and worship God, Christ, the Mother of God and the saints punctuate Byzantine history, providing a constant narrative of Orthodox belief versus heretical challenge. The winners would always take the title Orthodox and brand their opponents as heretics. The feasts and saints' days of the Christian calendar marked out the rhythms of daily life; images of the divine were everywhere in daily life, from stamps of the Cross on loaves of bread to the Mother of God on coins. As a result, church was the most important building in the life of any Byzantine, the place where the rituals of faith were conducted, and the setting for humanity's communion with the divine, God's dwelling place on earth.[3]

That churches mattered more than any other type of building is apparent from the number that still exist, the quantity of surviving ecclesiastical objects and the sheer mass of textual references. Anyone who could afford it could build a church – and a surprising number did, for such buildings were both a sign of one's devotion to God and a perpetual prayer for salvation. Churches could be very personal foundations: many were built by individual patrons for their own family or personal monastic use; others were funded by groups of individuals, sometimes villagers. Very many were monasteries. Although large-scale and impressive churches were built throughout most of the Byzantine period, many were small structures, intimate and confined.

Inside the church, architecture, decoration and sacred objects came together in a celebration of the divine. Art historians often talk of the 'decorative scheme' of Byzantine churches. Church art, however, was considerably more than decorative. Because the church was regarded as heaven on earth, each part of the church, its decoration and fixtures and fittings, reflected its part in this role, as well as their own specific function.

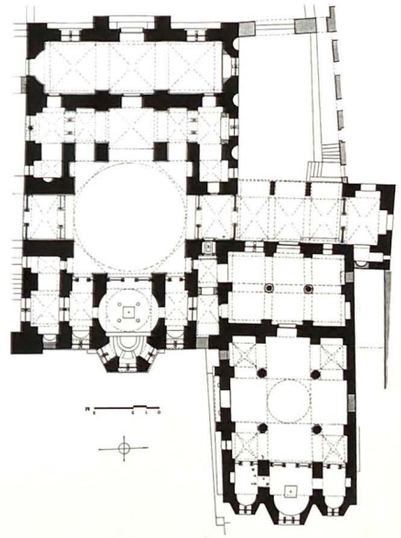
As a result, the architecture of a Byzantine church was both utilitarian, relating to the forms of worship that took place within it, and symbolic, carrying a deeper spiritual meaning.[4] Unlike a Western medieval church, where the worshipper is directed in a linear fashion, west to east, the Byzantine church is centralised. By perhaps the tenth century, the most common plan of a Byzantine church was the cross-in-square church with a central dome (figs 32, 33). The most popular version of this plan placed the dome on four columns within a square, but variations on the theme were multiple. The congregation tended to enter the nave, or *naos*, via a porch, called a narthex, at the west end of the church. The *naos* itself was square or rectangular in plan, but often divided by columns and piers. It was roofed by a dome, and the effect of that was to create a centralised, focused space, a vertical axis rather than a horizontal one. This was the space for the congregation, men on the right and women on the left. At the east end of the church, the sanctuary was divided into three, a central area where the altar was located, flanked by two smaller side areas, one to the north, where Communion was prepared and the paten and chalice stored, and one to the south for vestments and sacred books. The sanctuary as a whole was increasingly hidden behind the iconostasis (icon screen) or templon and reserved for the priesthood.

Mosaic was the material above all chosen to create a divine spectacle. Here art and architecture combined beautifully, the curved surfaces of the cross-in-square church interacting with the tesserae (cubes of glass) making up a mosaic. On close inspection, the fragment depicting St Andrew (fig.34) shows how each tessera was inserted individually into a plaster background on site to construct an image, and that this created an otherworldly spectacle of moving, reflected light. Paint was the next best thing to mosaic work, and the effect of paint within a church was to create a totally different visual display, darker and more intense.

The combination of *naos* as centralised space and sanctuary as an area set apart related to the nature of Byzantine religious services. On the whole, the congregation could listen to the priests, but not observe their activities. Certain activities – Bible readings and the delivery of homilies – took place at the doors of the iconostasis but the liturgy (the term refers to the Eucharist, but will be used here for any regular church service) was built around dramatic appearances of the clergy from the sanctuary at key points in the service displaying the Gospels and the sacraments.

In symbolic terms, the parts of the church were divided both vertically and horizontally and each part could be given a spiritual meaning. Vertically, emphasis has traditionally lain on the images within the church. These have long been understood as working in three registers. At the highest levels, the cupolas and apses are decorated with Christ, the Mother of God and angels. Below are scenes from the life of Christ, often called a 'festival cycle' because they have been seen as scenes representing the Twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church.[5] Finally, the lowest level is made up of saints, usually shown as single standing figures.

In this way, the top level represents heaven and, indeed, the central dome is most often occupied by Christ whose presence, though not visible to worshippers unless they chose to look right up, nevertheless hung over them



Figs 32, 33
Exterior and plan of the early eleventh-century monastery church of Hosios Loukas, near Distomo, in Boeotia

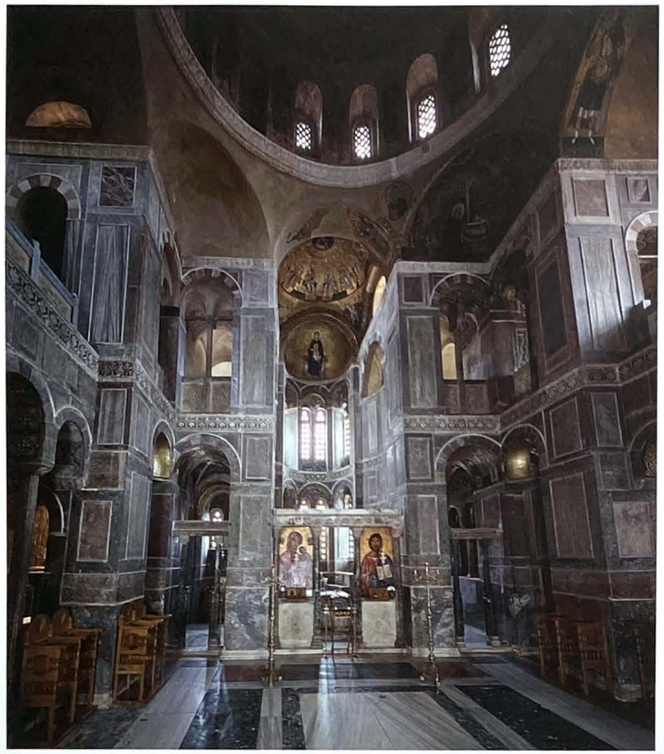


Fig. 34
The interior of the monastery church of Hosios Loukas

throughout their time in the building. In the apse, the Mother of God, bearing the Child, served to illustrate the Incarnation, proving that God became Man, was born of a Virgin and saved humankind. Below this, the scenes from the life of Christ could be understood in several ways. A common view is that they acted as books for the illiterate, a teaching tool for those who came to worship but who could not read. This is a convenient interpretation of the meaning of pictures in churches but it does not always match the reality, which is that such scenes were often uncomfortably high above worshippers and even beyond their sight. Rather, they made Christ's life present and visible as an eternal witness to Christian truths and a reassurance to believers. Finally, the saints, both on the walls and as icons, on the lowest level, closest to the worshippers, physically surrounded the viewers in the *naos*. They gazed out at worshippers, seeming to meet their eyes, acting as the first focus for worshippers on entering the church, as do the icons of Theodore Tiro and St James. The worshipper's first act was to make a circuit of these images, often the special saints of each church, displayed on stands (known as *proskynetaria*), venerating them through kissing them, lighting candles in front of them and touching them.[6] This corporeal contact with the saints enabled the faithful to share their power, as the likenesses were not understood by the Byzantines simply as pictures but as images which contained the authority of the divine figure. At the start of the liturgy, congregation and icons alike were censed and, in this way, both became equal participants and equal presences in the liturgy, forming a part of the communion of saints. Russian envoys to St Sophia in the tenth century were convinced that the angels descended from the mosaics to join in the celebration.[7] So images within the church drew the spectator into contemplation of the divine events and, beyond that, into participation in divine worship.[8]

Icons filled churches. Over time the interior of the Byzantine church went through a series of significant changes, stimulated by the desire to increase the sanctity of the altar and to emphasise the power of icons. In the Early Byzantine church the laity could visually participate in all the stages of the liturgy performed by the priests behind a low chancel barrier between the nave and the altar. But this gradually changed, and in the sixth century the Church of St Sophia at Constantinople was enhanced with a higher screen, the so-called templon screen, in front of the altar. This type of screen was found in other churches before iconoclasm, but it rapidly became the norm after iconoclasm, usually in marble as in the church at Skripou in 873/74 (cats 183, 184). By the twelfth century, icons were laid over the top of the epistyle (like the beam on Mount Athos with icons of the main church festivals, the Raising of Lazarus and the Transfiguration, as in cat. 216). Between the columns of the templon, icons or curtains were gradually inserted. As a result of these structures, the priest now performed part of the liturgy behind an opaque screen, enhancing the idea of the invisible holy of holies in the church and allowing him to make entrances into the church at dramatic moments in the liturgy. The tendency to separate laity from priesthood reached its final stage with the thirteenth-century development of the high iconostasis, a screen covered with icons which totally concealed the altar unless the central doors (usually decorated with an Annunciation, as cat. 281) were opened. The iconostasis included a whole range of icons for veneration, including the Deisis, the patronal saint of the church, the major festivals of the church, and other saints and prophets, and might be surmounted with a crucifixion.

Each church appears to have had its own diverse collection of saints. A saint may appear almost anywhere on the walls of a church, and be grouped with a variety of other saints from a range of dates in the liturgical calendar.[9] Although it has been suggested that saints are organised by rank, function and place in the calendar of the Church, this is not the case. Though saints within the Church certainly form defined groups – prophets, Apostles, such as St Andrew, Evangelists, martyrs, bishops, warrior saints, healer saints – the apparently arbitrary nature of the choice of individual saints portrayed within each church suggests that the individual nature and role of the church was important in picking the saints. Indeed, it is possible that churches were personalised through their choice of saint: the individual patrons, the type of monk, the type of church must all have been significant factors in the choices of saints.

Such was the setting for the liturgy, which was itself a performance celebrated with appropriate trappings within the space of the church (fig. 35). Many services took place early in the morning or at dusk, and churches were often small and relatively dark. As a result, lighting was of great importance, and church inventories and typika (foundation documents) regularly discuss the lighting devices in their particular building. Candles and oil lamps (cats 218, 219) provided artificial light; they might be suspended in glittering candelabra (cats 170, 171) and chandeliers, or placed in candlesticks.

The importance of the liturgy meant that liturgical vessels and books were valued highly and made of precious materials. The key liturgical vessels were the chalice, paten (cats 20, 80) and asterisk (for the Eucharistic wine and bread), and the associated vessels for the preparation of the Communion, the flabellum, or fan, the censer used throughout the service to cense congregation, altar and church. Processional crosses (cats 190, 191) were employed in the entry processions of the clergy and went before the Gospel-book. Altar tables too could be precious and lavishly decorated.[10] They, the bread and wine, the chalice and paten were all covered with appropriate textiles, often silks heavily embroidered in gold. The priests themselves had vestments appropriate for each service. The *epitrachelion* was an embroidered strip of cloth worn around the neck that all priests were obliged to wear when approaching the sanctuary, while the *epigonation* was a stiff gold-embroidered piece of cloth that hung from the girdle to the knee.

Books were especially holy because they contained the word of God. Consequently, they were often lavishly decorated and sumptuously bound, showing proper respect to God. The liturgy is an elaborate interweaving of texts from psalms, both read and sung, of passages from the Gospels and Epistles or Prophets, of a large number of prayers, some chanted, of short readings about the saints whose day it is, and of hymns. All of these needed books. Liturgical texts were not assembled into one book but in fact spread across several volumes. The prayers said by the priest in liturgy were uniquely written on a long scroll rolled to the correct place and held up by the deacon for the priest. These scrolls tended not to be heavily illuminated: the Patmos liturgical roll has an elaborate frontispiece showing St Basil the Great celebrating the liturgy inside an elaborate marble building, but the rest of its illustrations are initials, both religious and secular. Gospel texts were arranged in a lectionary, where they were divided into sets of lessons arranged according to the day of the year on which passage was to be read. The Gospel-book (cat. 205) played an active part in the liturgy, for it was carried out into church from the prothesis, and taken though the sanctuary doors into the bema, or sanctuary, where it was placed on the altar. This action symbolised, among other things, the entry of the Word of God into the world. As a result, Gospel-books frequently had impressive covers and less attention might be paid to their internal decoration. Indeed, there is a case for suggesting that some of the most elaborately decorated Gospel-books in Byzantium were never actually used but may have simply sat on the altar as representations of Christ's incarnate wisdom, just as the bread and wine of the Eucharist were his body and blood. However, hundreds of illustrated Gospel-books survive, showing a variety of ways of illustrating the narrative. Some use frontispieces with Gospel scenes, some have narrative strips between blocks of text; most have Evangelist portraits. Lectionaries (cats 61, 304) contained liturgical readings drawn from the Bible for the Eucharist, and from saints' lives, the Church Fathers and the Councils of the Church for other services.

Fig. 35
The interior of St Catherine's on Mount Sinai, with a service in progress

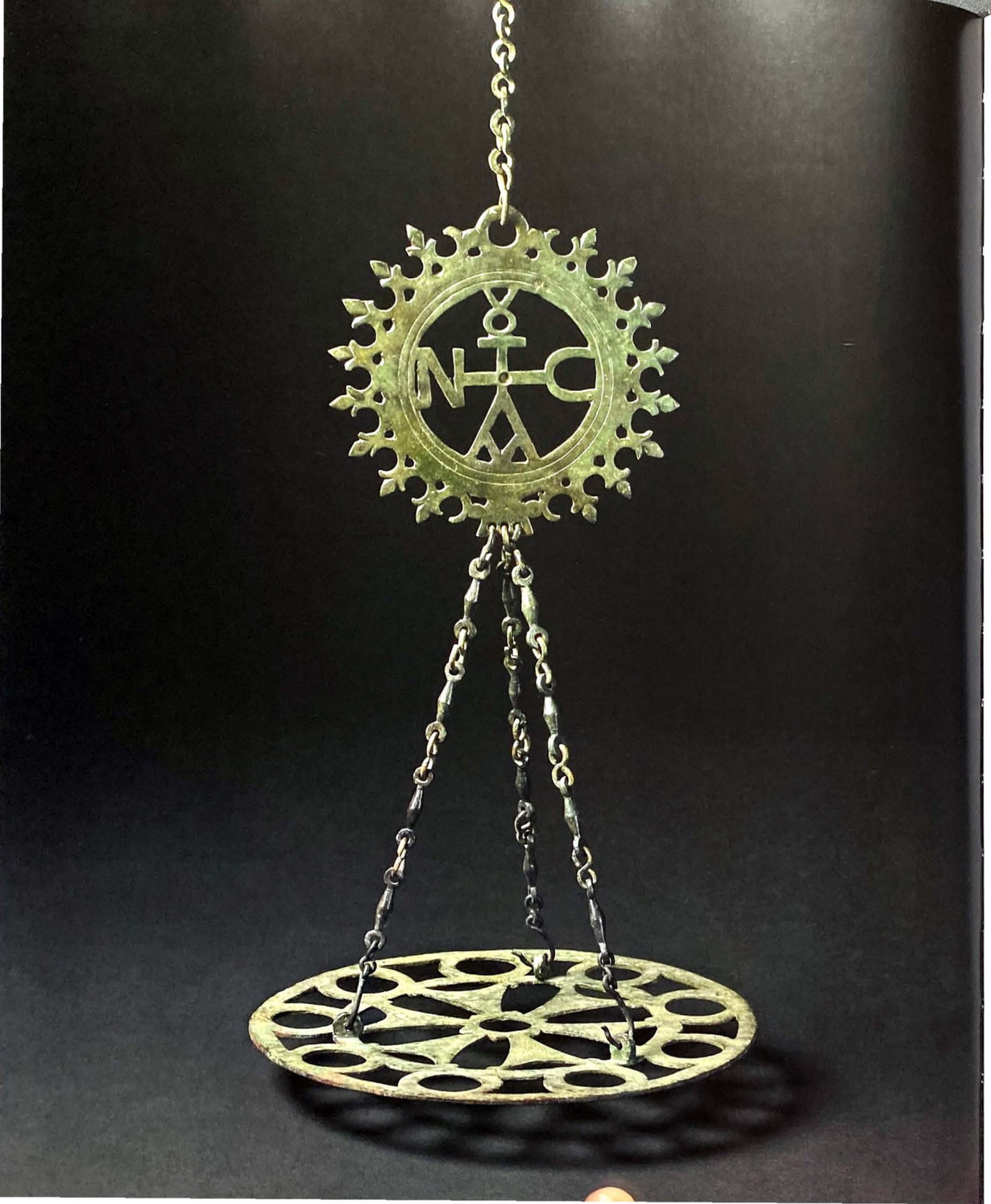
The psalter was perhaps the most important book in Byzantine daily life, to the extent that children learned to read and write from it or even, as in the bilingual psalter here, Western adults might learn Greek from it (cat. 177). In church, psalms were sung throughout the liturgy. In parish churches, they were selected for relevance to that day's feast; in monasteries, they were sung in biblical order over the course of the services. Both monks and lay singers must have known the psalter by heart – as, probably, did most of the congregation. At least 85 illuminated psalters survive and no two are the same. Illustrated in various ways, they offer numerous interpretations, meditations and commentaries on the psalms. Surprisingly, despite ways in which the psalms were used in liturgy, the texts are never rearranged to reflect this but always maintain their biblical order. To help monks in the recitation of the psalms, psalters were organised into twenty sections or *kathismata*, each containing between one and five psalms. To aid memory even further, each *kathisma* was subdivided into three. There are far fewer Old Testament books than New, in part reflecting their lesser place in the liturgy. The Book of Job, however, is one of the most popular, and over twelve illustrated copies survive.

The church was also a place where people might make individual offerings. Some took the form of votive gifts left for Christ, the Mother of God or the saints in prayer or in thanks for benefits received (cat. 198). Relics of saints were precious, offering the faithful a direct contact with the actual, tangible holy, and every altar supposedly contained a relic. Such remains could vary from a minute splinter of wood from the True Cross (cats 182, 188), encased as befitted its status, or a morsel of bone from a saint to the whole head or a hand of a saint. Such special relics also acted as magnets for pilgrims to the church.

The materials used to create the images and objects at church reflected both the resources available to the patrons and the importance of religion, for it was the patrons' duty to give of their best to God. There was a hierarchy of materials: mosaic and paint; gold, silver, bronze, brass, copper; and materials themselves might carry a symbolic meaning. Gold, for example, did not tarnish and so represented purity. Purple staining of pages of books represented not only an increase in price but also a comment on imperial status, purple being *the* imperial colour reserved for the emperor. Micro-mosaic icons were a highly specialised, particularly costly form of mosaic; the level and detail of skill needed to work on this scale using minute tesserae, each placed individually in position, surely with tweezers, is simply staggering. Objects might be further decorated with even more precious materials, inlaid in enamel perhaps (cats 199, 245) or gilded, and decorated with ornament and scenes appropriate to their use, as with the Riha Paten used for Eucharistic bread, where the Last Supper is depicted (cat. 20). And size always mattered. It related not only to cost, but also to function: small books were often intended to be read in private.

Within the church, architecture, imagery, the liturgy, as well as sights, sounds and smells, including voices, incense, smoke and candle-wax, heat and bodies, hard, polished floors, glittering materials, all combined to create the effect of translating the worshipper into a sphere beyond the worldly, and to translate the church into heaven, in order to move being 'at church' to being 'with God'.

170
Chandelier (*choros*)
Thirteenth–fourteenth century
Cast copper alloy, diameter 350 cm; height (without hangings) c.465 cm
Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich



171 ◂

Copper-alloy polycandelon

Eastern Mediterranean, c.550–650
Copper-alloy, length of suspension unit 87 cm; diameter of disk 28 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1994,1010.11

172 ↖

Church bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432
Cast bronze, height 72 cm; diameter 55 cm

Pec Patriarchate

173 ↑

Rodop's bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432
Cast bronze, 58 × 43 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2177

174 ←

Copper alloy plaque with the Hodegetria and saints

Byzantium, tenth or eleventh century
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 10.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PAE 1981, 1-3, 1

175 ←

Homilies on the Virgin Mary by James Kokkinobaphos, folio 3*v*

Constantinople, first half of the twelfth century
Manuscript on parchment, 23 × 16.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Gr 1208

176 →

Perfume brazier in the form of a domed building

Constantinople or Italy, end of the twelfth century
Silver, partially gilded, embossed and perforated, 36 × 30 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 109

177 ↠

Psalter with the veneration of an icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria, folio 39*v*–40*r*

Constantinople and Cyprus, around 1300
Tempera and gold on parchment, Latin and Greek bilingual Psalter and other texts of various dates, 29 × 24 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 A 9 (Hamilton 119)

ussillus eram inter fratres meos et ad dolecenuor in domo patris mei

pascebam oues patris mei

178 ←

Tray with representation of the Apostles Peter and Paul flanking a cross

Carthage, around 400
Clay, 37.9 × 30.8 cm; width of frame 4.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 12405 a+b, 12406, 12409, 12431 (mended from five sherds and restored)

179 ↖

Gilt-copper plaque with St Theodore

Byzantium (Constantinople?), mid-eleventh century
Gilt copper, 12.5 × 6.7 cm

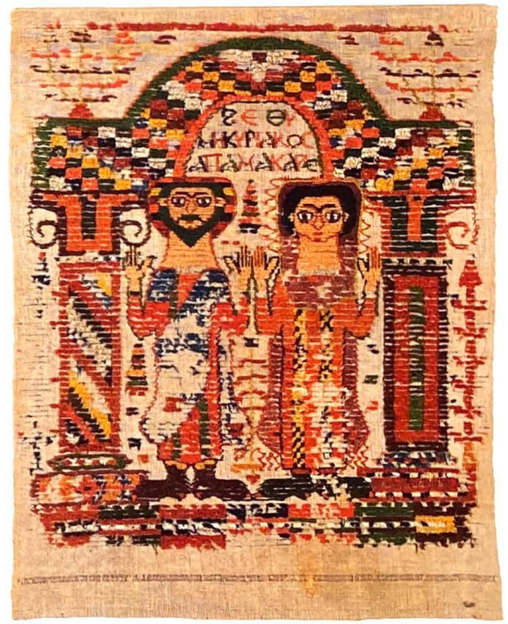
The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 90, 7-1.3

180 ↓

Textile hanging with St Makarios and woman in prayer

Egypt, fourth or fifth century
Linen and wool, 105 × 86 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7143

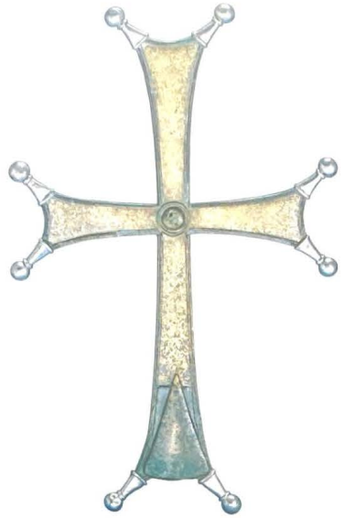


181 ↓

Reliquary sarcophagus

Byzantium, fifth-seventh century
Marble agglomerate,
27 × 51 × 25.5 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 7964



182 →

Reliquary crucifix

Constantinople, first half of the tenth century, Monastery of St Michael, Damokraneia (now Güzelce)
Partially gilded silver crucifix holder, 36.4 × 23.7 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. AD 3062

(The crucifix [above] and the sarcophagus [left] are for illustrative purposes only and are not exhibited)

183 ↑

Epistyle from the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou

Made on site, at Skripou, 873/74
Marble, 18.5 × 333 × 33.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.46

184 ←

Closure panel with two peacocks

Thebes, twelfth century
Marble, 57 × 60 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.x314

185 ←

Double-sided closure panel

Thebes, ninth century
Marble, 88.3 × 105.8 × 10.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, inv.no.x249

186 →

Double-sided closure panel

Thebes (?), 872/73
Marble, 97.5 × 73.8 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.x246

187

Silver chalice

Syria, Early Byzantine,
sixth century
Silver with niello and gilding,
18 × 26.6 × 16 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edward J. and Mary S. Holmes Fund, 1971.633

189 ←

Processional cross

Constantinople, first half of eleventh century
Cast copper alloy, hammered, engraved and punched, 36 × 30.1 × 0.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 3142

190 ↓

Processional cross

Byzantium, probably twelfth century
Bronze, engraved and embossed, 68 × 46.3 × 2.6 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2540

188 ←

Reliquary of the True Cross

Southern Italy (?), late twelfth century or *c.*1200
Silver gilt, cloisonné opaque enamels on a silver gilt support, wood, glass paste, 24 × 11.7 × 1.5 cm

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, inv. no. ca1554

191

Processional cross

Constantinople or north-western Anatolia, late eleventh or early twelfth century
Silver, silver gilt, niello, iron core and bronze shaft, 73 × 39 cm

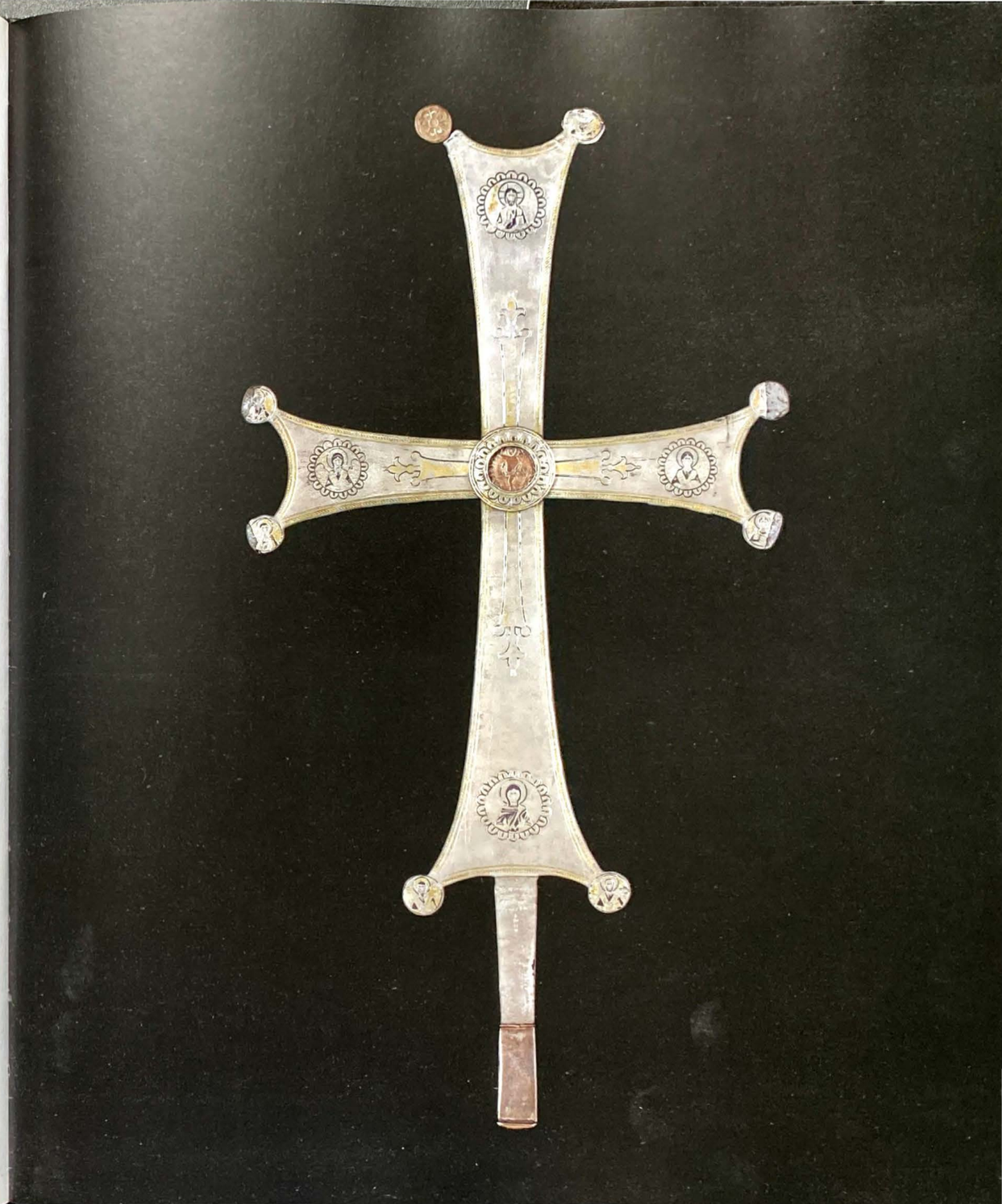
Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris, inv. no. Cl. 23295

192

The Cross of Adrianople

Late tenth century
Silver sheets, with engraving, partial gilding and niello decoration, riveted around an iron core, 38.5 × 31 × 0.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 33794



193 ←

Gold cross with nielloed inscription

Eastern Mediterranean, eighth century (?)

Gold, niello, height (including suspension loop) 7.2 cm; width 4 cm; weight 42.10 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, BC.M.355

194 →

Pectoral reliquary cross

Eleventh century

Silver sheet, niello, 7.1 × 3.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 21592, 21593, 21594

195 ↑

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century
Copper alloy, 7.3 × 4.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35552

196 ↑

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century
Copper alloy, 8 × 4.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 35556

197 ↓

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, late tenth or eleventh century
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 21990–91

198 ↓

Votive hand holding a cross

Syria-Palestine, sixth–eighth century
Bronze, 24 × 10 cm; cross, 13 × 10 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AA 2004-202

199 →

Pectoral cross with Four Evangelists

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century
Gold, filigree, cloisonné and champlevé enamel, emeralds, tourmaline, pearls, 9 × 6 × 1 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv. n-162

200 ◂

Lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin

Constantinople, first half of twelfth century
Lapis encrusted with gold, silver gilt, filigree, copper (the modern ring), wax resin, precious stones, one pearl, height 8.3 cm (10 cm with the ring); lapis: 6.4 × 4.3 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris. Département des Objets d'Art. MR 95

201 ▸

Reliquary *enkolpion*

Mid- to late tenth century (?)
Gold, silver gilt and cloisonné enamel, 3.8 × 3.2 × 0.6 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, 66.37.8

202

Cameo with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, early thirteenth century (cameo); Serbia, Peć or Prizren, early seventeenth century (setting)
Jasper green, cutting; silver, hammering gilding; enamel (blue and green); carnelian, mother-of-pearl, glass paste, cameo length 4 cm; width 3.5 cm; setting length 7.2 cm; width 6 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 4588

203

Pendant with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople (?), eleventh or twelfth century in a sixteenth-century mount
Rock crystal, gold, precious stones, pearls (mount), 6.1 × 6 × 1.2 cm (including mount)

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 3113

204 ←
New Testament,
folio 178*v*

Mid-twelfth century,
Constantinople
Parchment, 20.5 × 15.5 cm,
III + 431 folios

Bodleian Library, Oxford,
Auct. T. inf. I. 10 (Misc. 136, S.C. 28118)

205 →
Lectionary with
the Last Supper,
folio 9*v*

Constantinople or Asia
Minor, around 900
Parchment, 32.8 × 26.5 cm

National Library of Russia, St Petersburg,
cod. gr. 21

206 ←

Icon with the Annunciation and saints

Late twelfth century
Gilt-silver sheet, chased and repoussé, 31 × 27 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 46272

207 →

Handle of a standing censer (*katzion*)

Constantinople, *c.*1300
Bronze, cast with engraved decorative detail, 28.6 × 21 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11302

208 ↓

Plaque with St George

Asia Minor, fourteenth century
Bronze, gilded, hammered and engraved, silver, 10 × 9.5 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. X 1567

209 ↘

Plaque with St Niketas

Thirteenth century
Bronze, hammered, gilded, incised, 7.3 × 6.4 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. X 1091

210

Chalice veil

Late thirteenth–early fourteenth century
Silk embroidered with silver and gilded silver thread, 63.5 × 63.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 9320

211

Gospels with the Passion of Christ, folio 92*r*

Constantinople, second half of eleventh century
Parchment, 30 × 23.2 cm

Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Ms. Pal. 5

212

Epitaphios of Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes

Constantinople, Thessaloniki or the Peloponnese, 1406/07
Crimson silk with silver, silver-gilt, and coloured threads, 85 × 140 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 8278-1863

213
Wall tile with an
image of St Nicholas
Probably Constantinople,
tenth century
Coloured and transparent glazes
on white ceramic, 16.8 × 16.4 cm
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,
inv. 48.2086.1

214
Wall tile with an
image of St Arethas
Probably Constantinople,
tenth century
Coloured and transparent glazes
on white ceramic, 17.2 × 17.1 cm
The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore,
inv. 48.2086.2

215

The Raising of Lazarus

Twelfth century

Egg tempera on wood, 21.5 × 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 980

216

Epistyle fragment with the Transfiguration of Christ

Mount Athos, first half of the twelfth century

Chestnut wood, gesso and tempera, 23.2 × 23.7 × 2.5 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, INV. NO. 1-7

217 →

Incense burner

Serbia, Janjevo, fourteenth century
Bronze, casting, openwork,
11 × 12.5 × 3.05 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 161

218 →

Brass lamp

Eastern Mediterranean (?),
fifth-sixth century
Brass, 27 × 7.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1879.0524.1

219 ↓

Oil lamp

Egypt, sixth century
Quaternary alloy, cast in parts,
covered with green patina,
32.1 × 25.5 × 19.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11569

220 ↘

Brass lamp with
griffin's head handle

Italy (?), fifth-sixth century AD
Brass, height 15.9 cm; width 7.2 cm;
length 21.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1897.0820.1

221

Roundel with the
Mother of God

1078–81 (?), Constantinople
Serpentine, diameter 17.5 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.1-1927

222 ←

Mosaic with head of Christ

Ravenna, 545
Detached apse mosaic, restored in the nineteenth century,
53.5 × 38 cm
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1102-1865

223 →

Four Gospels, folio 111r

Constantinople,
mid-twelfth century
Parchment, 17.5 × 12.3 cm,
1+275 folios
Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice,
Z540=535

6

Icons

NANO CHATZIDAKIS

Detail of cat.239 ←

Byzantine icons originate from the Late Antique tradition of painted portraits, such as the funerary mummy portraits found at Fayum in Roman Egypt (cat.46). The word icon (*eikon*) itself is derived from the Greek verb ἐοικα, which means to resemble. Early Christians gave this name to portraits of holy figures. In Byzantium, the term icon was used to describe images in such diverse media as painted wooden panels, wall paintings or the minor arts. Here we shall consider the most prevalent use of the term: an image painted on a portable wooden panel.

According to tradition, one of the first painters of icons was the Evangelist St Luke, who portrayed the Virgin Mary from the life.[1] The use of icons is more explicitly described in the seventh-century *Life of St Pankratios*, and in the texts of the Church Fathers, who considered icons to be a medium of communication with the divine; in the words of Basil the Great, 'The honour shown to the image is conveyed to its prototype.'

After the iconoclastic edict of Leo III (727), the cult of icons was forbidden and any representations of holy figures or scenes from their lives were banned. Icons and church decorations were destroyed. The iconophiles were persecuted and accused of idolatry. Under such circumstances, the Church Fathers and high-ranking monks formulated the Orthodox dogma for the cult of icons. Among them, John of Damascus (*c.*675–*c.*753/54; fig.7) commented: 'An image is not always like its prototype in every way. For the image is one thing, and the thing depicted is another: one can always notice differences between them.'[2] This long period of dispute came to an end with the victory of the iconophiles, the so-called Triumph of Orthodoxy, in 843, under the reign of Empress Theodora and her son Michael III (cat.57).

Today, Byzantine icons are to be found in important monasteries, such as St Catherine's on Mount Sinai (figs 36, 37) and those on Patmos and Mount Athos (fig.40), in local collections and in the monasteries of Cyprus. Public collections of icons exist in the Byzantine museums of Athens, Thessaloniki, Kastoria and Veroia, and in the museums of Ohrid, Belgrade, Sofia, Moscow and St Petersburg, while many icons can be seen in the museums of Italy, Germany, France, Great Britain and America.

Icons from the period before iconoclasm have been preserved in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, which was outside the area of the imperial iconoclastic edicts (some of these icons were brought to Kiev in 1845 and 1850, as gifts from the monastery to the archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij [cats 47, 313, 314]). Other icons are preserved in churches in Rome, such as the seventh-century Virgin at Santa Maria ad Martyres-Pantheon, Rome (cat.47). Most – and the best of them – are painted in the encaustic technique, using hot wax to bind the pigments, a technique adopted from the funerary portraits of Late Antiquity. Others were painted with the egg tempera, which, after iconoclasm, became the standard technique for icon painting.

The use of icons after the Triumph of Orthodoxy in 843 and in the following centuries was gradually expanded in public and private. Outstanding works using precious materials, gold and enamel from Constantinople, such as the two icons of Archangel Michael in bust and in full length (cat. 58) that were taken to Venice by the Crusaders after the Sack of Constantinople in 1204, are now preserved in the Treasury of San Marco, Venice. Other examples were made of costly tesserae, imitating the art of mural mosaic, such as the early twelfth-century icons of the Virgin Pammakaristos and of St John the Baptist in the Patriarchate at Istanbul, and the icons of Christ Pantokrator from the Bode Museum in Berlin and the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence (cat.225). Particularly prized were micromosaic icons, such as the eleventh-century St Nicholas from Patmos, the twelfth-century St Stephen from Kiev (cat.268), the Transfiguration from the Louvre, Paris (cat.226), the early fourteenth-century diptych from Florence with the Dodekaorton (cat.227), the Annunciation at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the St Theodore from the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat.224). Major examples of the same period are kept in the monasteries of Mount Athos, such as St Anne and the Crucifixion at Vatopedi and St John the Theologian at the Lavra.

Another way of enhancing icons was to add gilded-silver revetments, such as those on the eleventh-century mosaic icon of St Nicholas from Patmos, and the fourteenth-century examples at Ohrid (cats 229.1–.2, 230–232),[3] decorated in repoussé technique with a great variety of motifs, sometimes interlaced with sacred figures and scenes of the life of Christ and of the Virgin. Such costly adornments commissioned by high-ranking believers were an important demonstration of devotion and in some cases they were designed as an integral part of an icon from the beginning.

Icons of the Virgin held an important place in devotion. In the Triumph of Orthodoxy (second half of the fourteenth century; cat.57), the icon of the Virgin functions as the perfect image, whose veneration had been restored in 843, thanks to the imperial support of Empress Theodora, who is depicted with her son Michael III and flanked by famous iconophiles. Icons of the Virgin in various iconographic types abounded in the imperial palace and in the monasteries of Constantinople.[4] Among the most famous is the icon of the Virgin Hodegetria from the Monastery of the Hodegon, regarded as the 'palladium' of Constantinople, which was considered to provide the protection of the Virgin to the city whenever under attack. The Hamilton Psalter (cat.177) shows this icon on a specially constructed *proskynetarion* (stand) beneath a large baldachin with protective

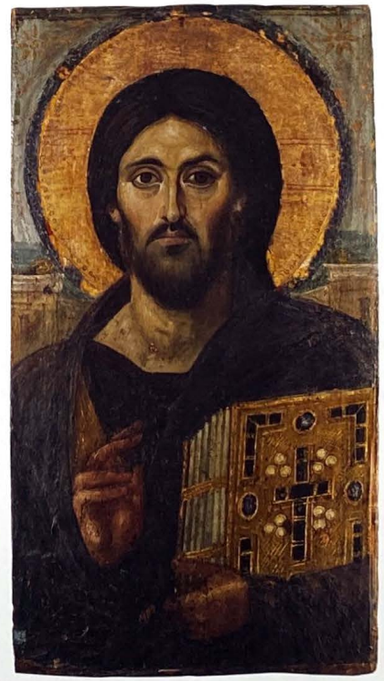


Fig. 36
Christ, Sinai, sixth century. Wood panel, encaustic technique, 84 × 45.4 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

Fig. 37
The Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae, twelfth century. Wood panel, egg tempera, 37.7 × 31.4 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

Fig. 38
The Virgin Hodegetria, the 'Arakiotissa', twelfth century. Wood panel, egg tempera, 103.5 × 73.5 cm

Byzantine Museum of the Archbishop Makarios III Foundation, Nicosia

railings; at either side, in smaller scale, devotees in lavish red garments kneel in prayer before it. The icon of the Virgin Blachernitissa, which was venerated in the apartments of the imperial palace of Blachernai, is known from written sources, while the icons of the Virgin Psychosostria (She who saves souls; cat. 232) and of Christ Psychosostes, most probably from the monastery of the same name in the Byzantine capital, were sent as a gift to Ohrid in the early fourteenth century.

Processions of the icon of the Virgin are depicted in wall paintings, such as those in the thirteenth-century Vlacherna church in Arta and in the Markov monastery (1376–81), where the icon is carried by 'he who bears the holy icon in litanies and official feasts'.[5] Panels painted on both sides were intended for processions of this kind, and examples are known from the late twelfth century, such as the double-sided icon of the Virgin Hodegetria and of Christ, Man of Sorrows from Kastoria (cat. 246). The number of such works increased during the fourteenth century, and surviving examples include the double-sided icons of the Virgin and the Annunciation (cat. 230), of Christ and the Crucifixion from Ohrid, and of the Crucifixion and the Virgin Hodegetria from Thessaloniki, now in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (fig. 39).[6]

The veneration of icons increased from the eleventh century, due to the transformation of the templon from a simple, low barrier separating the sanctuary from the nave to a higher screen adorned with successive registers of icons, the iconostasis. In the lowest register, between the columns, large icons (despotic icons) were placed, usually depicting the Virgin, Christ and the patronal saint of the church in a composition of the Deisis that finds its most appropriate place here.

Higher up, on the epistyle or architrave of the iconostasis, smaller icons depicting Apostles, saints and festival scenes were placed. Preserved in the Sinai monastery are early examples of epistyles on a single long beam, from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (cat. 317).[7] Other twelfth-century examples are also known from Athos, such as the Transfiguration, now in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (cat. 216), and the Raising of Lazarus, now in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (cat. 215), both painted on a red ground from the same templon icons of the Monastery of Vatopedi. From the early fourteenth century epistyle icons with scenes of the Nativity, the Baptism, the Resurrection (Anastasis) and the Doubting of Thomas survive in Ohrid and Belgrade (cats 233–235).

Inside the church other icons of various dimensions were either placed on *proskynetaria*, in some cases on the feast day of the depicted saint, or hung on the walls. The bema doors to the sanctuary are usually decorated with the Annunciation, as we know from a twelfth-century example in Cyprus,[8] which displays considerable affinity to the two icons of the same subject from Ohrid (cats 229.1, 229.2).

Smaller icons, diptychs, triptychs and polyptychs were made for travellers or pilgrims for private devotion. One precious work of this kind, undoubtedly commissioned by a nobleman, is the early fourteenth-century mosaic diptych with the Dodekaorton from the Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence (cat. 227).

The style of icons followed, in general terms, the same artistic trends as mural painting and manuscript illumination, and the individual painter's skill in the treatment of the materials can be seen in the result. The early encaustic icons of Christ (fig. 36), of the Virgin and of St Peter in Sinai and in the icons of the Virgin and SS. Sergios and Bacchos, now in Kiev (cats 313, 314) bear witness to the high standards of the Constantinopolitan workshops in the sixth and seventh centuries.

After iconoclasm, during the Middle Byzantine period, the workshops of Constantinople produced icons of exquisite quality. Many are preserved in the Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai, such as the miniature-like, twelfth-century icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos (cat. 323) and those of flawless classical character, such as the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonae (fig. 37),[9] as well as the late twelfth-century Annunciation (cat. 322) on a highly burnished gold ground, an outstanding example of the so-called manneristic trends of the Komnenian period. In other cases, during this period, the style of the icons is associated more closely with wall-painting workshops, such as the late twelfth-century despotic icons of the Virgin and of Christ from St Neophytos and from the Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera, Cyprus (fig. 38).[10]

After the capture of Constantinople by the Crusaders in 1204, important workshops, so-called Crusader workshops, emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean, in Sinai, Cyprus and Palestine, with distinctive technical and stylistic features presenting an original combination of the Byzantine tradition with practices of Western art.[11] In the same period, traits distinctive of other local workshops appear in icons of Kastoria and Veroia, painted with earth colours on a silver background and on roughly worked wood, such as the Prophet Elijah within the cave from Kastoria (cat. 242).[12]

With the recapture of Constantinople by Michael VIII Palaiologos in 1261, and throughout the last period of Byzantium, alongside the remarkable flourishing of wall-painting workshops, which left exceptional examples of their art in churches in the capital, Thessaloniki, Mount Athos, Ohrid and the wider region of Macedonia, icon painting also thrived. The icon with the imposing figure of St James

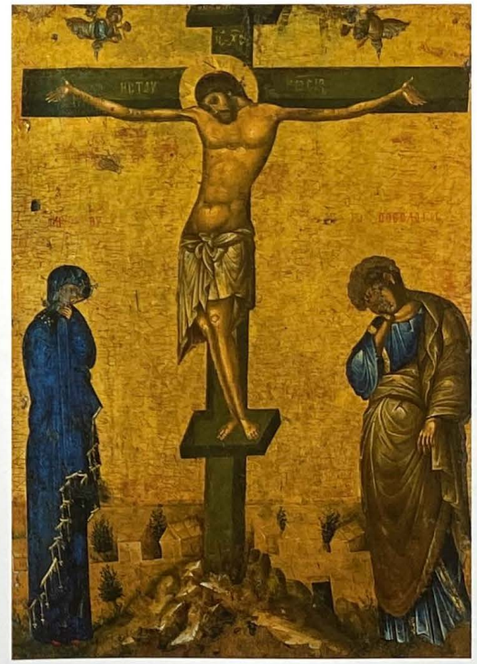


Fig. 39
Crucifixion, Thessaloniki, with on the reverse the Virgin Hodegetria, fourteenth century. Wood panel, egg tempera, 103 × 84 cm

Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, T. 169

from Patmos exemplifies the 'volume style' known from the frescoes of Sopoćani (1264). Icons such as the Virgin Psychosostria with the Annunciation on the reverse at Ohrid (cat.230), the Crucifixion from the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens (fig.39) and the Christ Pantokrator (cat.241) and St John the Theologian of Mytilene (cat.240) are among the best examples of the art of the early and of the later Palaiologan era. During this period Mount Athos was established as the major centre for the sponsorship and collecting of icons. In the churches, chapels and treasuries of the monasteries a great number of the most important icons of this period are preserved. They were commissioned from the best workshops of Constantinople, and from the region of Thessaloniki, as can be seen in the late fourteenth-century series with the Apostles from a Deisis at Chilandar and Vatopedi (fig.40).[13]

From the early fifteenth century, icon painting attests to the high cultural standards of the island of Crete, which had been under Venetian rule since 1204. The Cretan painter Angelos Akotantos, who is known from the will he drafted before embarking on a journey to Constantinople in 1436, created a refined individual style represented in a series of icons bearing the signature 'XEIR ANGELOU' (the hand of Angelos).[14] In his work, Angelos re-establishes old subjects, such as the Virgin Kardiotissa (cat.239), and introduces new ones, such as St Phanourios, while enriching known iconographic types, such as St Theodore, with a number of Western elements (cat.238). Having assimilated the teachings of Palaiologan painting, he was the best representative of the Constantinopolitan tradition in the island, and became with his work the leader of the Cretan School, which flourished particularly during the second half of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

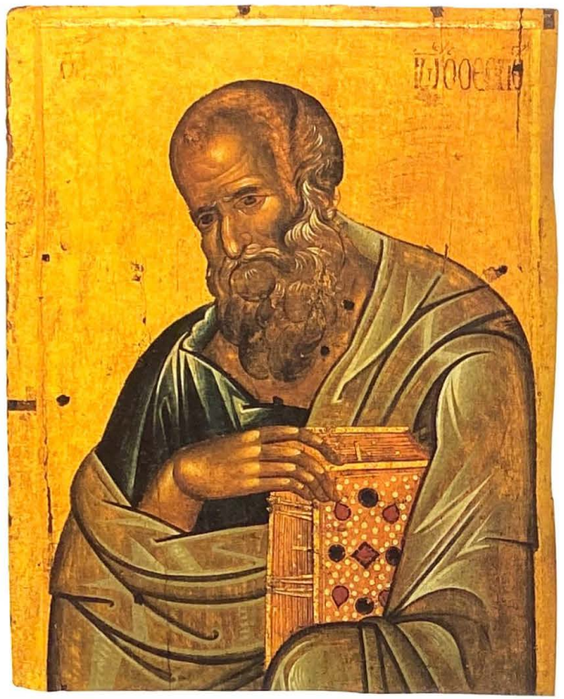


Fig. 40
St John the Theologian, from the Deisis, fourteenth century. Wood panel, egg tempera, 119 × 94 cm

Monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos

224

Micromosaic icon with St Theodore

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Wood, tesserae of marble, jasper, lapis lazuli, stone and gilded copper, wax, resin, 9 × 7.4 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 6029

225 ←

Micromosaic with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, 1150–75
Mosaic on wood, 54 × 41 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no. 3

226 →

Micromosaic with the Transfiguration

Constantinople, around 1200
Tesserae of gilded copper, marble, lapis lazuli and glass, wax; originally on wood, transferred to slate in 1864 and restored (lower part of Christ's body, right hand side of his face) in putty and stucco, 52 × 35 cm

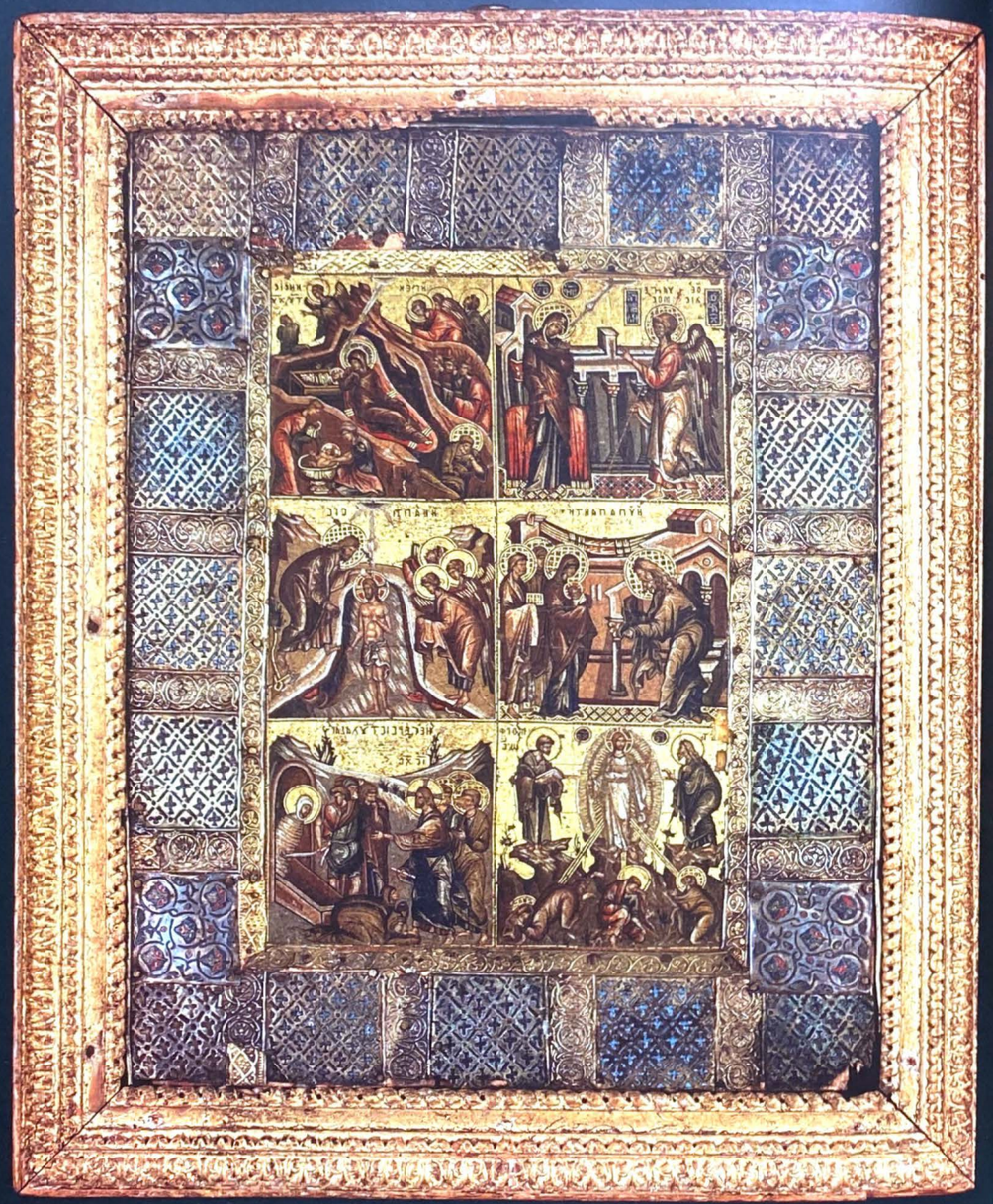
Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, MI. 145

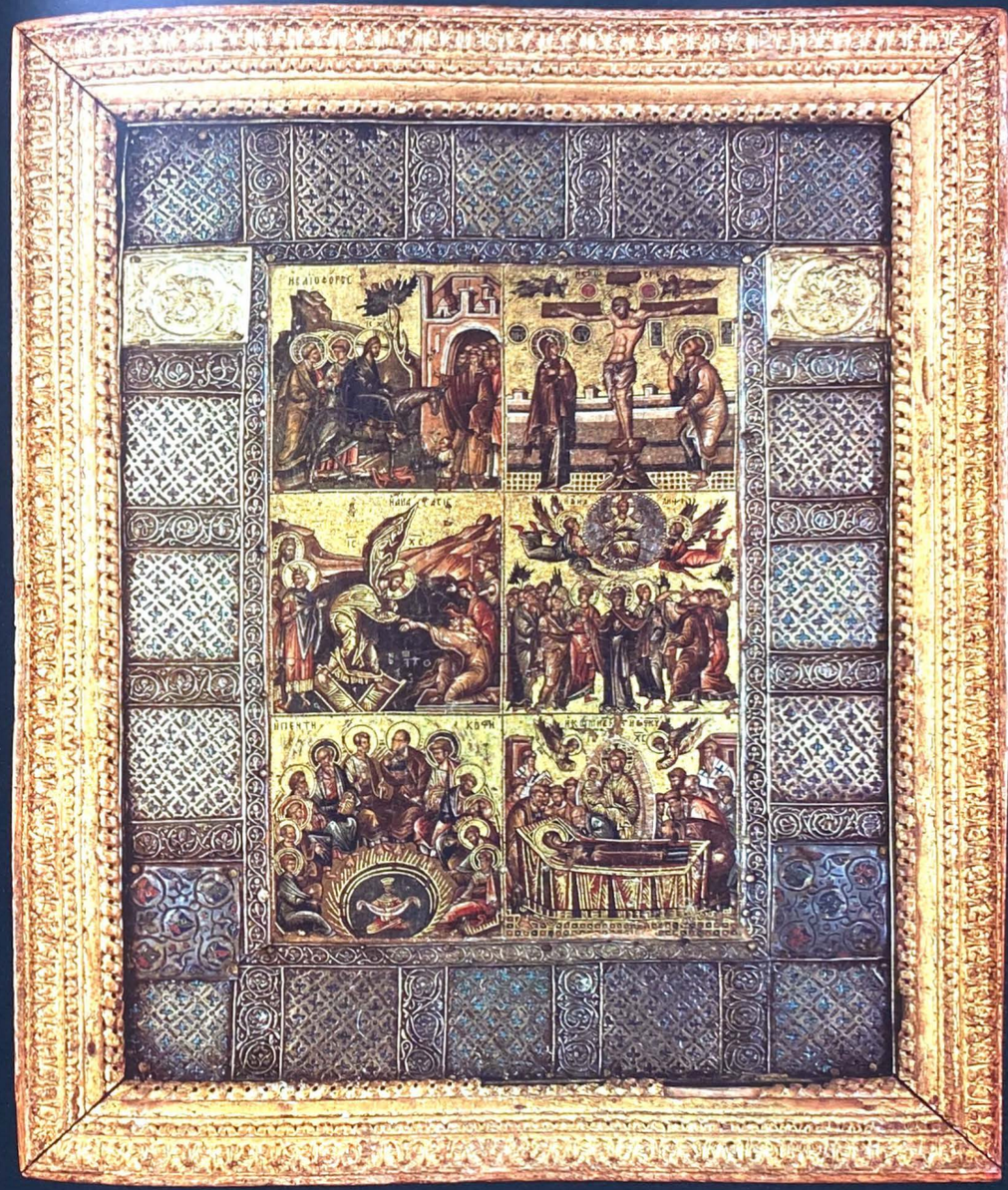
227 →→

Micromosaic diptych with festival scenes

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Mosaic on wood panel with silver-gilt and enamel frame, each panel 27 × 17.7 cm

Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, 09/00230042-43





228

Micromosaic with the Man of Sorrows

Constantinople, around 1300
Mosaic tesserae on wood,
13 × 19 cm (without frame);
23 × 28 cm (with frame);
98.7 × 97.1 cm (case open)

Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, inv. no. 89. Fondo Edifico di Culto, amministrato dal Ministero dell'Interno, Direzione Centrale per l'Amministrazione del Fondo Edifico di Culto

229.1, 229.2

Pair of icons with the Annunciation

Constantinople, eleventh–late thirteenth century
Egg tempera, gold and enamel on wood, with silver gilt revetment, both panels 111 × 67.5 cm

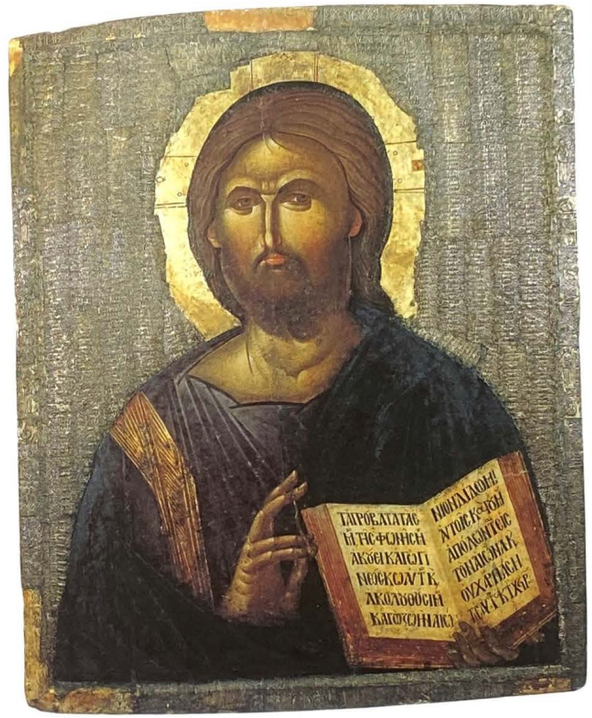
Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. nos 79 and 12

230

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Psychosostria (front) and the Annunciation (back)

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver-gilt revetment with enamel, 93 × 68 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 10



231

Icon with Christ

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 157.5 × 125 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 83

232

Icon with the Virgin Psychosostria

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 158 × 122 × 4 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 82

233 ↖

Icon with the Baptism of Christ

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44.5 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 6

234 ↑

Icon with the Anastasis

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 5

235 ←

Icon with the Doubting of Thomas

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 7

236 ↑↗

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Annunciation

Thessaloniki (?), third quarter of the fourteenth century
Tempera on wood (canvas), gilding, silver-gilt revetment, 99.5 × 73 × 5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2316

237 →

ARTIST FROM MORAVIA

Icon with St Demetrios

End of the fourteenth century, or beginning of the fifteenth century, Hilandar (?)
Tempera on board, 34.3 × 26.5 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 1351

238 ←

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS
(fl. *c.* 1425–50)

Icon with St Theodore

First half of the fifteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 122.8 × 70 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM. Loverdos Collection 2A.285-1335

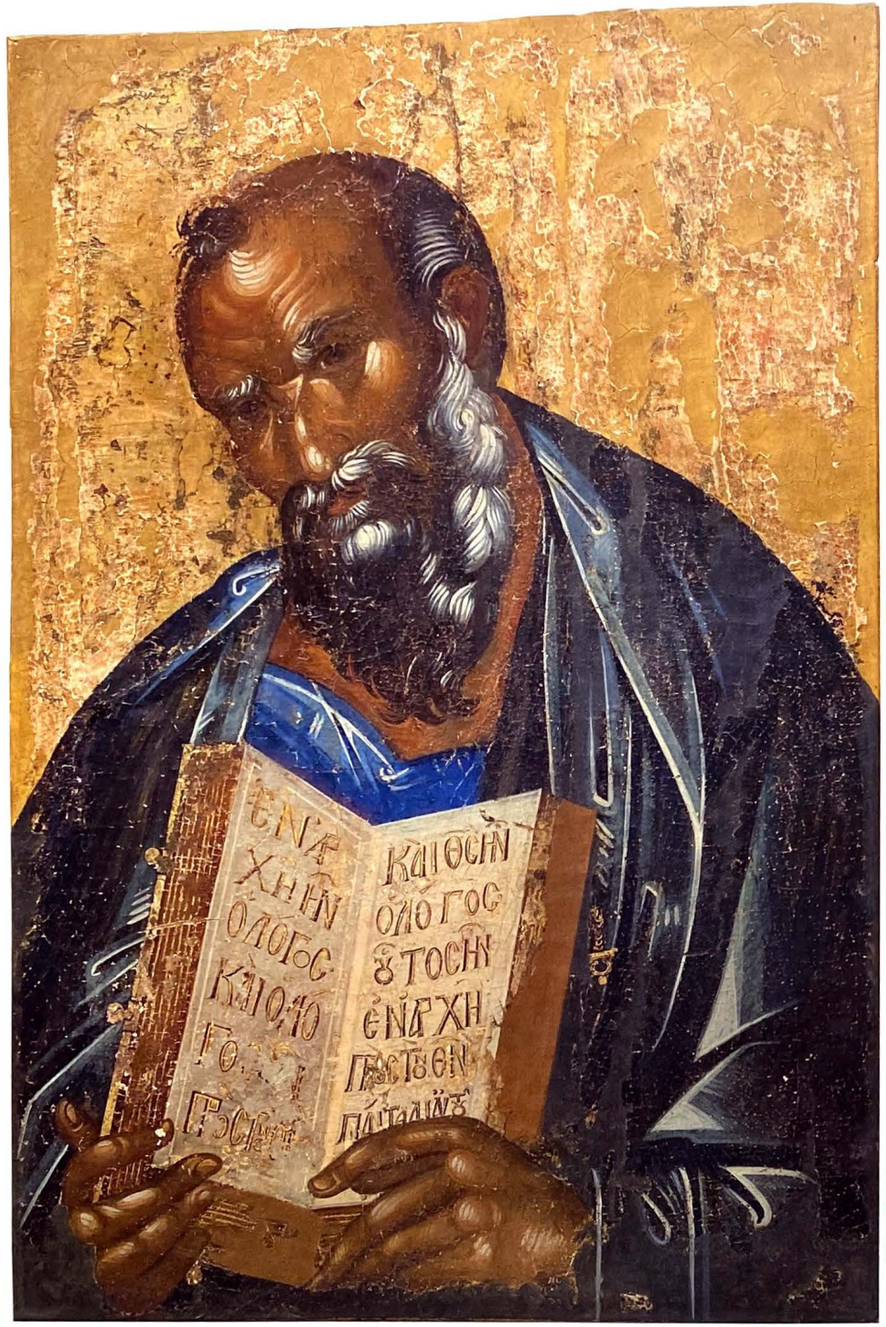
239 →

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS
(fl. *c.* 1425–50)

Icon with the Virgin Kardiotissa and Child

First half of fifteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 121 × 96.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 1552 (T.1582)



240 ←

Icon of St John the Theologian

Constantinople or Thessaloniki, *c.* 1370–80
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm

Ecclesiastical and Byzantine Museum, Mytilene

241 →

Icon of Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople or Thessaloniki, *c.* 1370–80
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm

Ecclesiastical and Byzantine Museum, Mytilene

242

The Prophet Elijah

1180–1200

Wood, 124 × 62.5 × 4.5 cm

Byzantine Museum, Kastoria, inv. no. 164/72

243

Icon with the Koimesis of the Virgin

Constantinople, early fifteenth century

Gesso on wood, gold leaf, egg tempera, 54 × 39 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. Ε122

7

Byzantium and the West

MICHELE BACCI

Detail of cat. 263 ⇐

Contacts between Byzantium and the medieval West occurred in all sorts of ways and at several levels. They are just one part of a wider web of cross-cultural convergences in the medieval Mediterranean. These included the dynamics of interaction within the culturally mixed societies of the Levant, the expansion of artistic knowledge through the movement of drawings and itinerant artists, the circulation of works of art along sea routes, the role played by ports and universally shared cult-places in the dissemination of forms and images, as well as the direct or indirect appropriation, imitation and refashioning of other people's artistic models for political, religious and economic purposes.

A major trend in this process was represented by the competition of Rome and Constantinople in their role as the important centres of Christian worship. As the apostolic and patriarchal see of Latin Christianity, Rome soon started working out its autonomous web of holy places associated with the worship of sites, relics and holy icons which aimed to evoke and refashion the aura of the most famous *loca sancta* of Palestine. The painted staurotheke of the Vatican Museums, made in Byzantium in the tenth century and preserved at least from the twelfth century onwards in the Lateran Sancta Sanctorum, is a good witness to this phenomenon (cat. 244). In many respects, papal strategies for the promotion of Rome as the New Jerusalem were analogous and even alternative to those enacted in Constantinople, where the most famous collections of Christological and Marian relics were established, especially between the tenth and twelfth centuries; such a competition was strengthened after the emergence of the juridical and theological dissensions which lead to the schism of 1054 and the Fourth Crusade of 1202–04. In those centuries, the astounding amount of holy treasures preserved in the Byzantine capital strongly contributed to the shaping of its aura and aroused public admiration even in the westernmost lands: Constantinople then became the goal for pilgrims from throughout Europe, and some authors even stated that it had been founded to prevent Saracens from desecrating the most precious relics of Asia and Africa.[1] In the wake of the Crusades many Eastern reliquaries were either bought or looted and entered into the treasures of Western cathedrals and monasteries: some of them were contemporary or slightly earlier works of art, such as the late fourteenth-century staurotheke presented in 1463 to the Venetian Scuola della Carità by the famous humanist Bessarion (1399/1400–72; see cat. 253), whereas others were already very old objects, such as the early ninth-century nielloed reliquary of the True Cross (cat. 52) which is deemed to have been owned by Pope Innocent IV (1253–54). In their new settings, such precious containers were usually left unaltered, though often conveniently enframed within Gothic monstrances.[2]

The desire for Byzantine reliquaries was enhanced by their material preciousness. Luxury goods of both profane and religious use, including manuscripts with sumptuous bindings, Islamic and Byzantine silks, Syrian and Egyptian glass and metalwork, as well as Italian, Greek, Arab and Chinese ceramics, were shared by international aristocratic milieux, regardless of their provenance; they were also included within church treasures, as shown by the extraordinary collection of precious objects in San Marco, Venice (cats 58, 62, 64, 80, 81, 176).[3] Westerners were also eager to appropriate more monumental church furnishings, such as brass doors (cat. 265).

Icons were deemed to be the artistic genre more peculiar to Byzantine tradition: from the eleventh century onwards, Westerners started telling the stories of the most sacred images of Christ and the Virgin worshipped in Constantinople, and became accustomed to using icons as visual counterparts to individual devotion. Their high reputation was stimulated not only by their ideal status as more or less direct copies of famous archetypes 'not painted by human hands' or made from life by such saints as the Evangelist Luke, but also by the compositional and iconographic features which made them efficacious portraits enabling communication between the devotees and their holy benefactors. One of the most recognisable characteristics of this kind of image was a half-figure presentation, as stated in the early twelfth century by the French theologian Hugh of St Victor.[4] One accurate imitation of this model is the early thirteenth-century Madonna signed by a certain '…nellus', now in the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa (cat. 252).

The wave of Byzantinising painting in thirteenth-century Italy (the so-called *maniera greca*) was largely promoted by the involvement of icons in the religious practices of both individuals and groups, including the new mendicant orders. Eastern panels are thought to have been widely introduced into Italy in this period, although very few original icons (such as the Pisan *Madonna di sotto gli organi*; fig. 41) are still extant. Italian towns which had direct connections with the Eastern Mediterranean, such as Pisa, Venice and Genoa, probably played a major role in the dissemination of this new type of religious image, which was rapidly adapted for new settings and functions: the small dossal made for a location on the altar table of the Pisan church of San Silvestro (cat. 248) and including a Deisis at its centre was an abridged version of the iconographic programme associated with the horizontal icons decorating the epistyles of Byzantine sanctuary screens.[5]

New devotional trends, nourished by the mendicant orders in the Late Middle Ages, laid emphasis on the Passion as the precondition of human salvation and favoured the making of images encouraging their beholders to feel remorse for their sins. Giunta Pisano, a painter known to have worked for both the Franciscan and Dominican orders, revitalised the Byzantine scheme of Christ dead on the Cross by visually stressing its painful aspects. A special image, that of the *Akra tapeinosis*, which showed the Saviour's dead body unnaturally lifted upwards and often associated with a sorrowful representation of the Virgin, was frequently repeated in the West and transformed into one of the most popular themes telling of individual and Eucharistic devotion, that later known as the *Imago pietatis*, *Vir dolorum* or Man of Sorrows (cats 246, 247.1–2).[6]

Besides iconographic schemes and functional models, Western artists also happened to imitate some technical and stylistic devices of their Byzantine colleagues. This proves to be especially true for painting, which was prized as the most distinctive 'Greek' art: for example, according to the twelfth-century *Treatise on Several Arts* by the German monk Theophilus, the Byzantines excelled in the use and combination of colours.[7] The impact of painting in its different media (book illuminations, murals, icons and mosaics)

Fig. 41
Madonna di sotto gli organi (icon of the Virgin Dexiokratousa) *c.* 1200. Tempera and gold leaf on wood, 93 × 55 cm
Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, Pisa

on the arts of the medieval West was much greater than that of architecture, sculpture or metalwork. Stylistic analysis shows that, especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Latin painters made use of earlier and contemporary Byzantine formal devices in their quest for a more naturalistic rendering of the human body: implicitly, this practice shows that they looked at Byzantium as the heir to a long artistic tradition rooted in Roman and Early Christian Antiquity.[8]

But how did they become acquainted with Byzantine art? Besides the study of works of art preserved in the West, they could make use of collections of drawings, such as the rather puzzling Magdalen College Musterbuch of the late twelfth to early thirteenth century (cat. 264), or establish direct contacts with Greek painters, some of whom are known to have worked for Latin patrons either in the West (as Helias Spileotes, a book illuminator working in Cologne in 1021, did)[9] or in their homeland (see the bilingual Gospel-book of *c.* 1300, cat. 261, made in Constantinople for a Western reader). The involvement of Byzantine masters was especially prized by those powers which, like Venice and Norman Sicily, had traditional connections with Constantinople and aimed to appropriate the apparatus and symbolic role of the Eastern empire, best conveyed by the splendour of mosaic decoration.[10]

Fig. 42
Deceased Woman in the Presence of the Enthroned Virgin and Child (fragment), *c.* 1453. Wall painting, 131 × 170 cm

Chora Monastery (Kariye Camii), Istanbul

It is not so easy to find examples of Western influence on Byzantine art. Nonetheless, interesting cases of fertile interaction are the adoption of painted initials in some Greek manuscripts of the ninth century, and the use of cloisonné enamels, probably borrowed from Carolingian practice.[11] In the Palaiologan period, the art of the metropolitan centres occasionally made use of Gothic ornamental features in monumental painting and sculpture, and appropriated translucid enamels for the decoration of liturgical vessels;[12] an Italianate mural made shortly before 1453 in the narthex of the Chora Monastery Church in Constantinople is an isolated testimony to the fascination with Early Renaissance style (fig. 42).[13]

In earlier times, there had been much more interaction in the Western borderlands of the Orthodox world, such as in South Italy (whose territories were largely included in the Byzantine Empire before the Norman conquest in the eleventh century)[14] and the Balkans (especially the Serbian kingdom),[15] where different styles were mixed together, such as Byzantine-type paintings with Romanesque and Gothic architectural patterns. In the wake of the Crusades, and especially after 1204, with the establishment of several Latin-ruled territories along the sea routes of the Eastern Mediterranean, cross-cultural connections were intensified. In the mixed societies of Acre,[16] Lebanon,[17] Cyprus,[18] Rhodes,[19] Athens,[20] Euboea,[21] Crete[22] and Constantinople itself (which was ruled by Latin emperors from 1204 to 1261),[23] Westerners imported their own habits and traditions, which were either simply juxtaposed or integrated or even mingled and synthesised with the art and style of the indigenous populations. Glazed pottery from late medieval Cyprus (cats 257, 258) suggests the blending of forms of different origins that is so typical of multicultural societies.

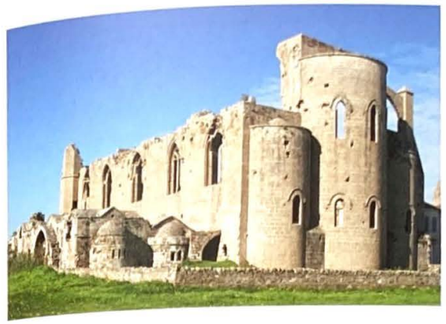


Fig. 43
The metropolitan church of St George of the Greeks, Famagusta, second half of the fourteenth century

Whereas artistic synthesis, resulting from a long process of formal selection, was more natural for luxury goods and everyday objects, other considerations often prevailed in the field of religious art. With some exceptions (among them the fourteenth-century Italian murals in Rhodes and Famagusta),[24] the Greeks under Frankish rule tended to remain loyal to Byzantine tradition in the representation of saints and sacred events, as shown here by the detached fresco (cat. 255) with St Catherine in imperial garb from a chapel on Mount Penteli, dating back to 1233–34, when Attica was under Latin rule; this loyalty did not prevent them from adopting Western ornaments or architectural devices if these proved useful to enhance a church's sumptuousness, as is made clear by the fourteenth-century Gothic church of St George of the Greeks in Famagusta (fig. 43).[25]

Latin settlers, though making frequent use of Western models, especially in architecture, sculpture and book illumination,[26] also shared an interest in Byzantine pictorial tradition and often patronised Greek painters to decorate their churches, such as at Abu Ghosh and Bethlehem in twelfth-century Palestine[27] or in the fourteenth-century murals of the Arap Camii in Pera[28] and Our Lady of Carmel in Famagusta.[29] At the same time, they soon appropriated the Eastern Christian devotional use of icons and started sponsoring and producing icon-like panels, most of them dating from the mid- to the second half of the thirteenth century: though preserved for the most part in the Monastery of St Catherine on Mount Sinai, there is no general agreement as to their original place of production, whether in Acre or on Sinai itself, even if it is plausible that many of them were brought by pilgrims as ex-votos to the holy site. Be this as it may, the icons often display formal characteristics which point to the interaction with the artistic traditions of the different religious groups settled in the wider area of the Eastern Mediterranean. Eventually icon painting, represented by the mid-thirteenth century icon with St George on horseback (fig. 44), consisted of an original mixture of Byzantine, French, Italian, Armenian, Arab Christian and Islamic elements.[30]

Fig. 44
St George on Horseback, from Crusader Palestine, mid-thirteenth century. Egg tempera and gold leaf on pine panel, 26.8 × 18.8 cm

British Museum, London

244

Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century
Tempera and gold on board, 26 × 12.5 × 2.5 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 61898

245

Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, eleventh century (central plate); Rhine-Meuse, early thirteenth century (mount, reverse and lid) and seventeenth century (corner angles); silver gilt, silver, copper, champlevé enamel, gem stones, wood core, velvet, brown varnish (reverse), total height 30 cm (Byzantine plate: 13 × 10 cm)

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 8093

246

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows

Kastoria, last quarter of twelfth century
Egg tempera on wood,
115 × 77.5 × 3.5 cm

Byzantine Museum, Kastoria

247.1–2

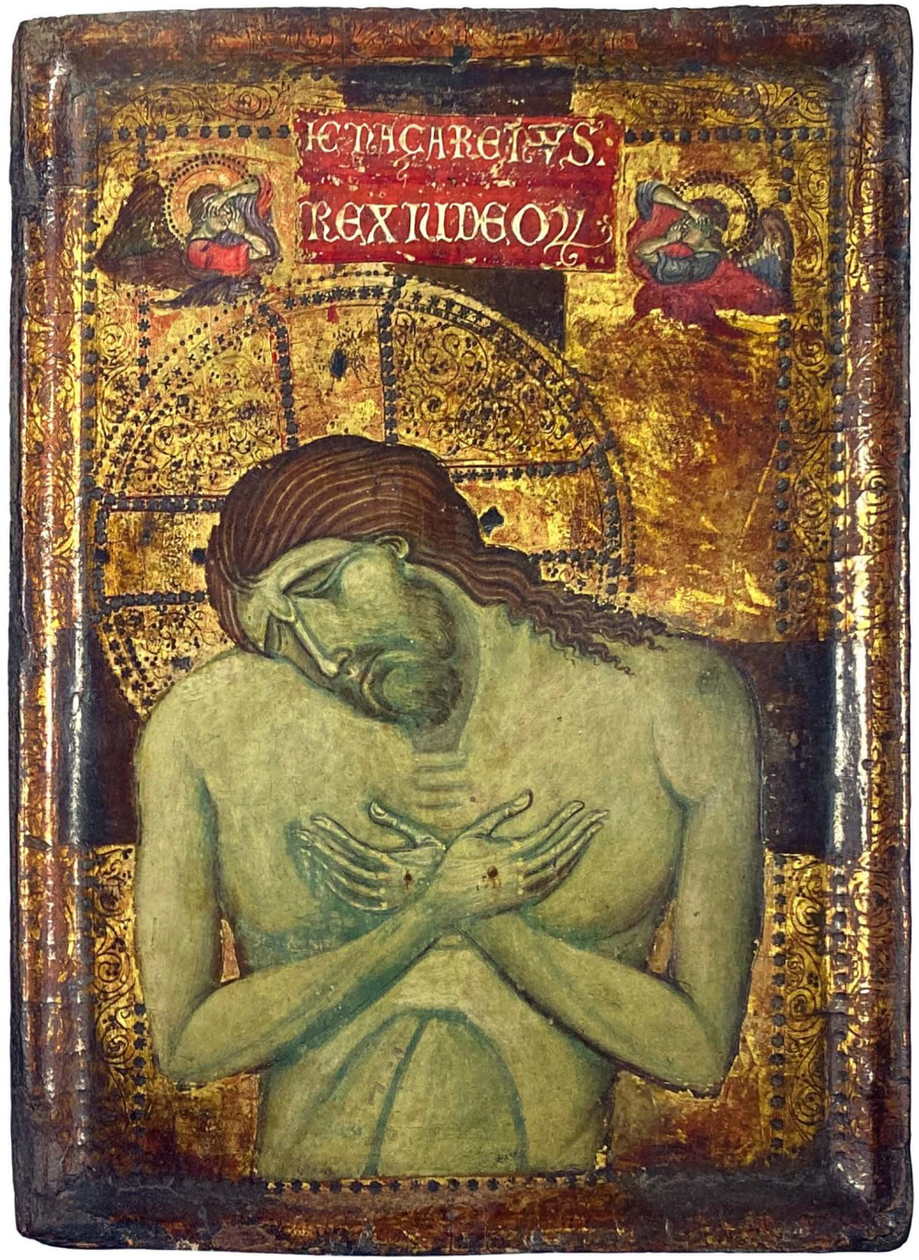
UMBRIAN ARTIST

Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows

*c.*1250–60

Egg tempera and gold on panel, left wing 32.2 × 22.8 cm; right wing 32.4 × 22.8 cm

National Gallery, London, NG 6572 and NG 6573



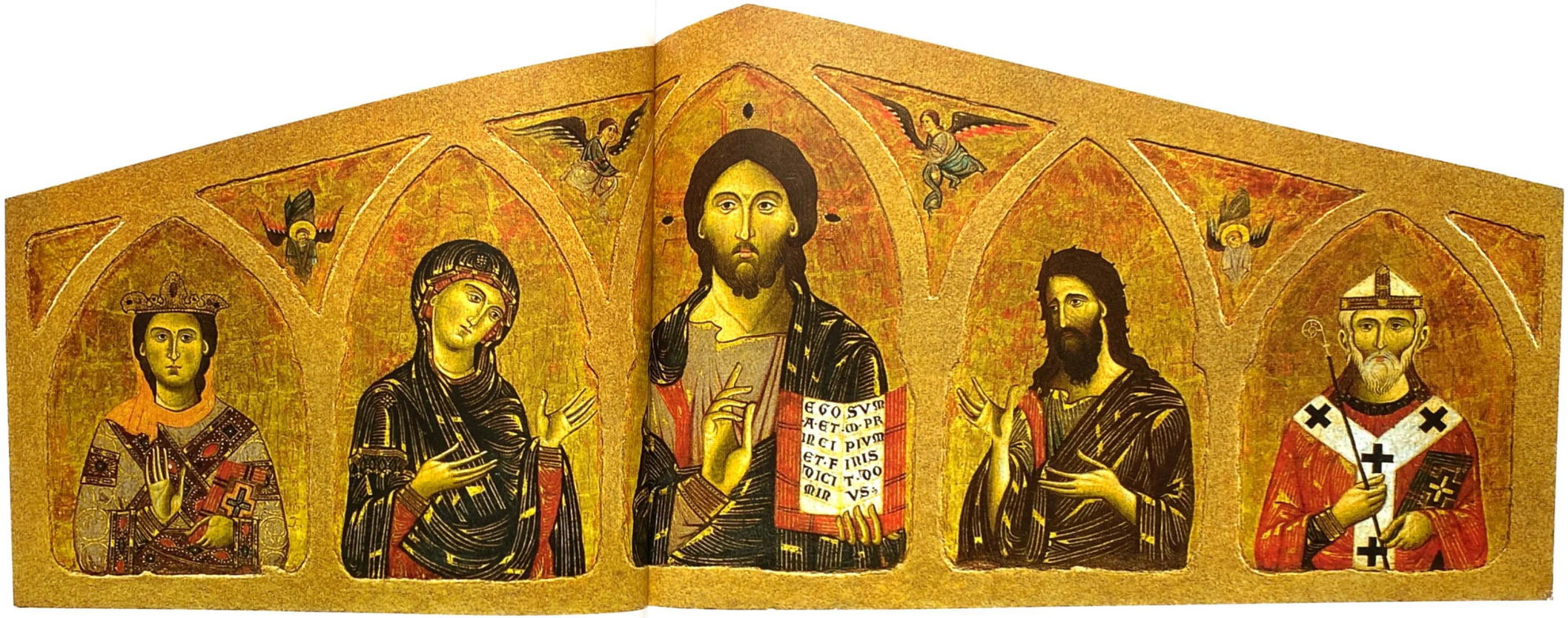
248

FRANCESCO DA PISA (?)
(fl.1298–1301)

Deisis with St Catherine of Alexandria and St Sylvester

Second half of thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar,
87 × 217 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo,
Pisa, inv. no. 1582



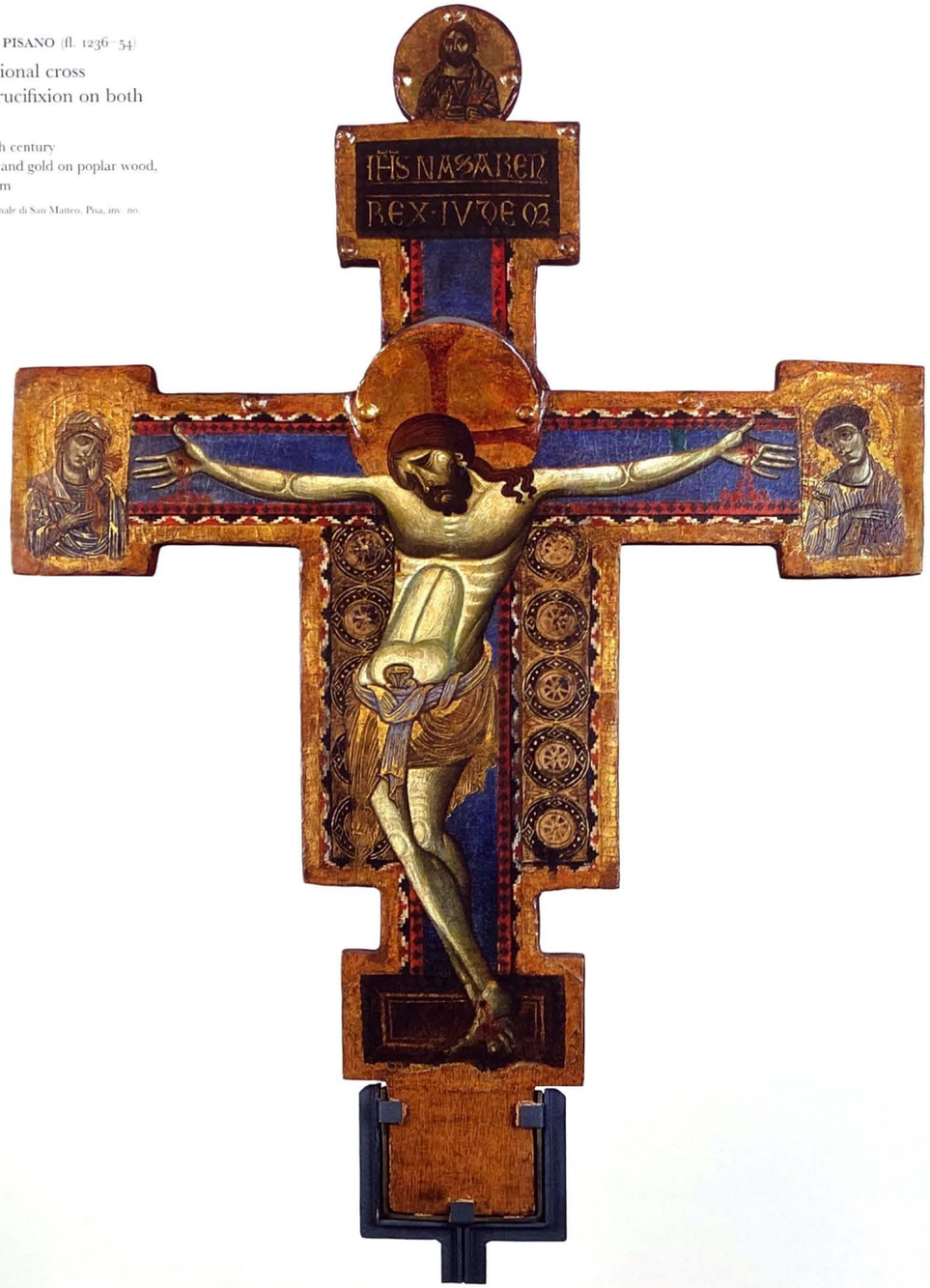
249

GIUNTA PISANO (fl. 1236–54)

Processional cross with Crucifixion on both sides

Thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar wood, 113 × 83 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 2325



250 ←

Triptych with Virgin and Child enthroned with angels and saints

Made in Italy, possibly at Rome, Naples or Siena, between c. 1315 and c. 1340

Egg tempera with gold on gesso, canvas and wood, painted in red on verso, 39.7 × 27.9 cm (open)

Polesden Lacey, The McEwan Collection (the National Trust)

251 →

Icon with the Virgin and Child, Church Feasts and Saints

Venice (?), mid-fourteenth century

Egg tempera on wood, stucco, gold glass, 42 × 30 × 1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2972

252 ←

Icon with Virgin and Child

Mid-thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar, 80.2 × 59.7 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 1576

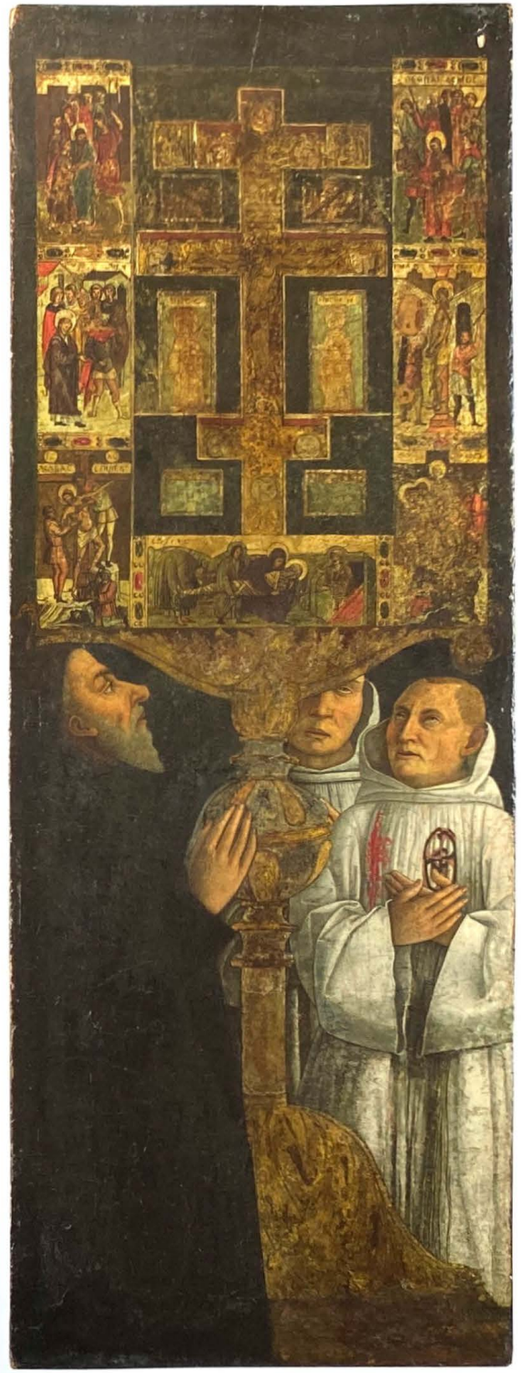
253 →

GENTILE BELLINI (d. 1507)

Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary

Venice, 1472–73
Egg tempera with gold and silver on panel, 102.3 × 37.2 cm

National Gallery, London, NG 6590



254
Wall mosaic with head of an angel

Torcello, second half of eleventh century
Mosaic, 31.6 × 24.6 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 6460

255 →
Wall painting with St Catherine

1233–34
Detached fresco, 211 × 97 × 7 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 1067

256 →→
Funerary cloth with Othon de Grandon and the Virgin and Christ

Cyprus, last quarter of the thirteenth century
Embroidered taffeta and silk, 88 × 328 cm

Historisches Museum, Berne

257 ↓↓←

Glazed bowl with a representation of a fish

Cyprus, Paphos region, first half of the thirteenth century
Clay, lead-glaze, height 9.3 cm; diameter 17 cm; diameter of base 6.8 cm

Levantis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. B/2003/070

258 ←

Glazed bowl with a representation of a falconer

Cyprus, Lapithos region, early fifteenth century
Clay, lead glaze, height 9.8 cm; diameter 13.8 cm; diameter of base 7.3 cm

Levantis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. B/2003/021

259 ←

Capital with angels

Thirteenth century
Marble, 29.4 × 30.5 × 26.5 cm; diameter of base 21 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. Π834

260 →

The Melisende Psalter covers

Jerusalem, *c.* 1131–43
Ivory, 22 × 14.5 × 0.5 cm; silver and silk, 23 × 5.8 × 0.8 cm

The British Library, London, Egerton 1139

261 ←

The Four Gospels, folio 55*r*

Constantinople, beginning of the fourteenth century
Manuscript on parchment, 33.5 × 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Greek manuscript 54

262 →

Missal with Crucifixion, folio 191*v*

Acre, third quarter of the thirteenth century
Parchment, 32 × 23 cm

Capitolo della Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, Perugia, Ms. 6

263 ←

Leaf from a model book, showing Christ and Zacchaeus, and St Theodore and St George

German artist (?), thirteenth century

Silverpoint and sepia with red ink on vellum, 36 × 22 cm

Augustinermuseum, Städtische Museen Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, ms. no. G23/1C

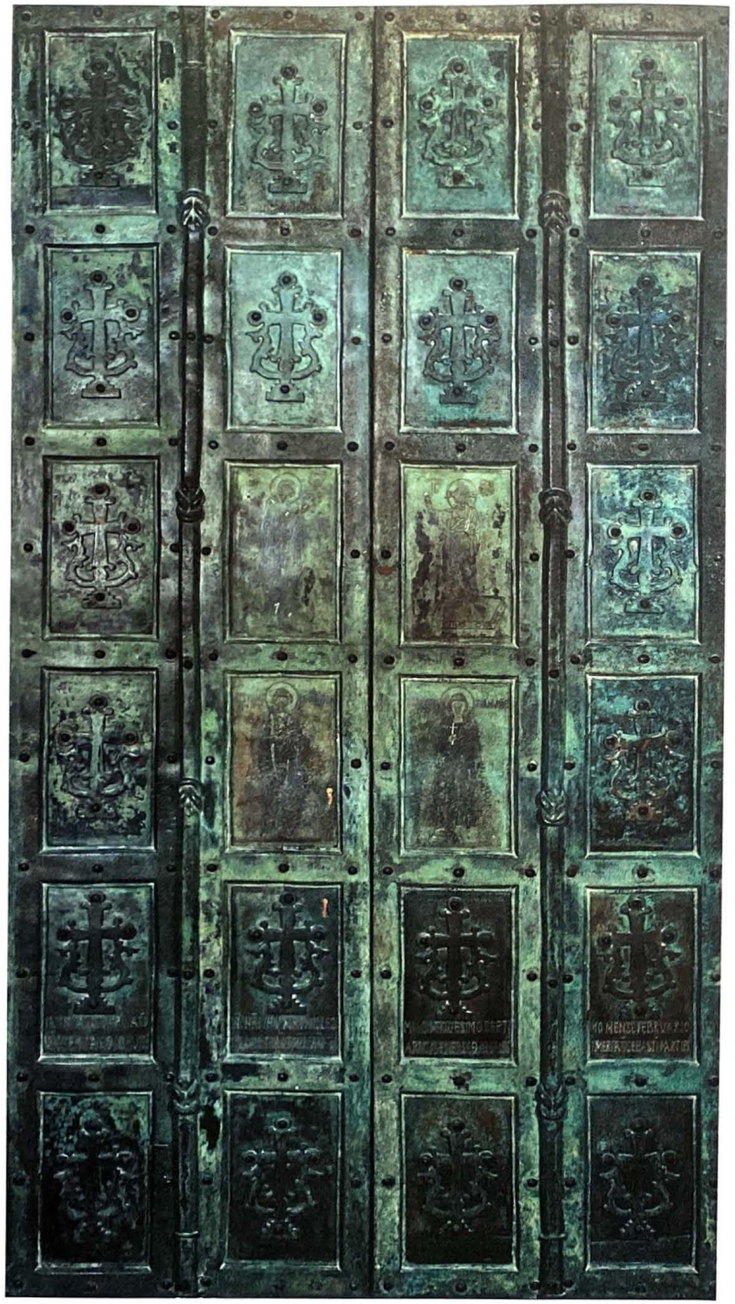
264 →

Commentary on Genesis with drawing of Christ, folio 155*v*

Cyprus (?), *c.*1175–1225; fifteenth century

Paint on parchment, 33 × 54 cm

The President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, ms Gk 3



265

The doors of the Church of San Salvatore de Birceto, Atrani

1087

Brass, 333 × 184 cm

Church of San Salvatore de' Birceto, Atrani

8

Beyond Byzantium

ANTONY EASTMOND

Detail of cat.305 ⇐

In the middle of the tenth century, the Byzantine emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos compiled a handbook, the *De Administrando Imperio* (*On the Adminstration of the Empire*), to guide his son and heir, Romanos II Diogenes, through the complexities of diplomacy with the many small states that surrounded the empire.[1] Through a succession of chapters which variously outline the history, people and rule of each of these states, their weaknesses and their potential threat to Byzantium, Constantine presented the empire to his son as the superpower of the Mediterranean and beyond; an empire at the hub of a network of client states, all of which could be controlled from Constantinople by playing each state off against the others, by exacerbating their internal weaknesses and by supporting their external foes. While the candidly manipulative picture of scheming and sometimes convoluted politics in the text seems to define the modern stereotype of the word 'Byzantine', the *De Administrando Imperio* also provides a characterisation of the empire that Constantine himself would have been happy to support: that of the centrality and dominance of Byzantium in all that happened in the *oikumene*, the word the Byzantines gave to the known, civilised world that surrounded them.

Byzantine art has often been seen at the heart of a similar cultural hub, dominating the art produced by its eastern Christian neighbours, from the Balkans in the west to the Caucasus in the east, from Russia in the north to Egypt, and even Nubia and Ethiopia, in the south. There is much evidence to support this view of the centrality of Byzantine art in the Eastern Mediterranean. Developments within the empire influenced the style, the iconography and even the functions of the art subsequently produced in all these regions. The magnificent splendour of imperial art – silk robes flecked with gold, palaces with silver mechanical automata and mosaics showing great military victories – acted as archetypes for the display of power for other rulers to imitate. Byzantine religious art – painted and mosaic churches, icons, manuscripts and metalwork – similarly provided ways to visualise the complex theological and spiritual ideas of Christianity. Looking from Constantinople to the world beyond Byzantium emphasises the shared characteristics of the art produced by Christians in the Eastern Mediterranean, based on a common Byzantine iconography for the life of Christ. But it does so at the expense of looking only through Byzantine eyes. The view from within those neighbouring cultures was often very different: for them Byzantium was just one cultural model, albeit an important one politically, ecclesiastically and historically. They could also look elsewhere to the other major powers of the Eastern Mediterranean, notably the Islamic dynasties of Iran, the Levant and North Africa, which offered rival means to display power and wealth, and gave access to different cultural and visual traditions than the Greco-Roman inheritance of Byzantium. These states also had their own indigenous traditions, and many had Christian histories as long and illustrious as those of Byzantium itself, which continued to influence the art that they produced. The view from outside Byzantium presents a different picture of the empire from that produced by looking out from within. It is possible to discern a variety of responses to Byzantine culture: imitation, emulation, adaptation on the one hand, but also transformation and even rejection on the other. The changing value and status of Byzantine art abroad is, of course, linked to the empire's political and military strength, but not always in as direct or obvious a way as might be assumed.

Constantine VII compiled his handbook at a time of expansion in the empire, and in its aftermath the influence of Byzantine art abroad can be seen at its strongest. Between 950 and 1050 the borders of the empire grew in all directions: to the east, after the army of John Tzimiskes (969–76) had recaptured parts of Mesopotamia, Basil II forced Georgia to cede its south-western provinces of Tao-Klarjeti to the empire in campaigns in 1001 and 1021, and in between he fought on the western frontier of his empire to reconquer Bulgaria, which had flourished in the ninth and tenth centuries as an independent empire. Within a generation of Basil's death, the Armenian kingdoms of Vaspurakan, Kars and Ani had been annexed to the empire, its kings killed or pensioned off to estates in Cappadocia. At that point Byzantium covered its greatest territorial extent since the reign of Justinian.

The evidence from the Balkans in this period supports this picture of Byzantine dominance, both military and cultural. The Bulgars had been converted to Christianity in the 870s thanks to the work of the missionaries Constantine (better known by his religious name of Cyril) and Methodios, who had devised a new alphabet, Glagolitic (a precursor of Cyrillic), for their Slavic translation of the liturgy. This was not only part of the general evangelising mission of Christianity, but also a ploy of foreign policy, to draw Bulgaria into the Byzantine sphere of influence, and away from that of Rome or Germany. As well as following Byzantine liturgy, the Bulgars also adopted Byzantine art to accompany it. Little survives from this early period, but the excavations of the round church in the new Bulgarian capital of Great Preslav, for example, suggest that it had been modelled on the Church of the Prophet Elijah, one of the imperial chapels built within the Great Palace in Constantinople by Basil I (867–86).[2]

The people of Kievan Rus' too were converted to Christianity at this time, and there as well the role of art as a diplomatic tool can be seen. The Russian primary chronicle records that the decisive factor in the decision to convert was art: an embassy sent to Constantinople was deeply impressed by the enormity and splendour of St Sophia, which demonstrated the overwhelming and all-encompassing power of Christ, as well as that of the Byzantine emperor, God's vice-regent on earth.[3] Over the following century emperors sent gifts of artists and materials to Kiev to help design and decorate the city's new churches. Kiev had been laid out in imitation of Constantinople with its own Golden Gate, and emperors provided the mosaicists to decorate the city's own version of St Sophia in the 1030s. The mosaics in the Church of the Archangel Michael (*c.*1108–13) show the tradition continuing into the twelfth century (cat.268). As a region which had never come within the Roman Empire, it showed the ease with which Byzantine artistic traditions could be accepted.

Among the Christians of the Caucasus, Egypt and the Near East, Byzantium could not play so

Fig. 45
Portrait of Gagik-Abas of Kars, with his wife and daughter, *c.*1050. Manuscript. Jerusalem, St James 2556, fol.135bis

decisive a role. All these regions had indigenous Christian traditions going back to the fourth century and earlier; indeed, Armenians claimed to have a Christian state that predated the conversion of Constantine the Great.[4] These states were also much closer to the Iranian world, which had its own visual traditions, particularly for the display of power, that could be traced back to the fifth century BC. The Caucasus, in particular, lay on the fault line between the Greco-Roman and Iranian worlds, and the people there looked east as often as west for their visual language. When the Armenian monarchy was revived in 884, its first king, Ashot I Bagratuni (884–90), turned to the Abbasid Muslim Caliphate for his crown and investiture robes before seeking the same recognition from Constantinople.[5] A fragmentary manuscript of the last ruler of the Armenian city of Kars, Gagik-Abas (1029–64), shows him seated cross-legged on a carpeted dais with his wife and daughter, all wearing elaborate silk robes woven with lions and elephants (fig.45). It is an image that owes everything to the Muslim world,[6] and was perhaps a deliberate riposte to Byzantium, which was on the verge of annexing his kingdom.

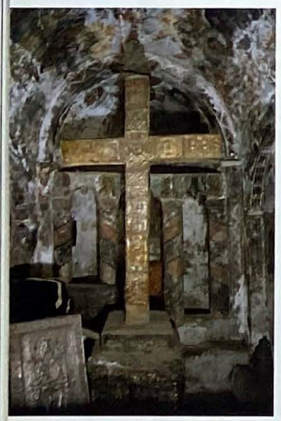


Fig. 46
Pre-altar cross in the church of SS. Kvirike and Ivlita at Lagurka, Svaneti, Georgia, 1111 and later

At the same time, the patriarch-catholicos of neighbouring Georgia, Melkisedek (1010–29), travelled twice to Constantinople to seek gifts from Basil II and Constantine VIII (1025–28), receiving 'silver, church ornaments, icons, crosses, and vestments for prelates and priests'.[7] His access to the capital built on a formidable new network of links between Georgia and Byzantium which had been spurred by the Byzantine takeover of Georgia's south-western provinces and by the creation of a Georgian monastery, Iviron, on Mount Athos (founded in 980).[8] This became a centre for translations from Greek into Georgian of major Greek theological and liturgical texts, which led the Georgian Church to adopt Byzantine liturgical practices, rather than the older Jerusalem rites, on which it had relied in the past. However, this Byzantinising tendency was tempered by a continued interest in particular local artistic forms, notably Georgians' delight in repoussé metalwork, whether on icons or pre-altar crosses, which have no counterpart in Byzantine art or liturgy (fig.46).

This difference in attitude towards Byzantium between the countries of the Caucasus partly reflects their geographical locations, partly the religious divide between them. Georgia was in communion with the Byzantine Church, but Armenia was not. It, like the Syriac and Coptic churches in Syria and Egypt, had never approved the canons of the fourth ecumenical council of 451, and so belonged to a distinct religious world. This meant that these churches had less interest in looking to Constantinople for liturgical or theological innovations. Despite this, many Armenians worked within the empire, often attaining high ranks at court, and in 989 it was an Armenian builder, Trdat, best known for building the cathedral in the Armenian capital of Ani, who rebuilt the earthquake-damaged dome of St Sophia, after 'many skilful workers among the Greeks [had] tried repeatedly to reconstruct it'.[9]

The example of Armenia, in which the general iconographic influence of Byzantine art is balanced by Iranian and local stylistic developments, reveals clearly the ambivalent light in which Byzantium was regarded by its neighbours. In the centuries that followed, Byzantium's other neighbours were also to adopt a more nuanced acceptance of the Byzantine core that linked them all, as their local religious traditions and regional political statuses grew stronger. This was accentuated by the gradual decline of Byzantine military and diplomatic power in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries, marked most clearly by the gradual loss of the Anatolian plateau to arriving Seljuq and Turcoman tribes, and then, in 1204, by the Fall of Constantinople itself to the forces of the Fourth Crusade. This attempt from western Europe to recapture Jerusalem had been diverted away from its original goal by the Venetians in control of the fleet on which they sailed, and led to 57 years of Greek exile from their capital. It allowed rulers, who in previous centuries would have accepted inferior court titles which placed them within the Byzantine world hierarchy, now to adopt the full panoply of imperial titles and regalia for themselves.

A second empire rising in Bulgaria under Peter and Ivan Asen in the 1180s soon set its sights upon Constantinople itself, and the brothers rallied support by using Byzantine art against the empire. They proclaimed that a miraculous icon of St Demetrios found at their new capital, Veliko Trnovo, demonstrated the Byzantine saint's change of allegiance to Bulgaria from his main cult site, Thessaloniki, Byzantium's second city.[10] Even after the failure of their attempt to capture Constantinople, Bulgaria's rulers continued to proclaim themselves as universal emperors in their art (cat.287).

Alongside Bulgaria, Serbia also rose to prominence in the thirteenth century. The founder of its ruling dynasty, Stefan Nemanja, had been paraded in chains through Constantinople after a defeat by Emperor Manuel I Komnenos in 1172, but was able to return to Serbia to establish it as a viable and powerful state.[11] He was even able to retire as a monk to the monastery of Hilandar, which he had founded on Mount Athos, taking the name Simeon. His son, Stefan the First Crowned, had himself acknowledged as king, and translated his father's body back to Serbian soil to be buried as a saint in the monastery of Studenica. This then became the centre of a dynastic cult, to which all later Serbian rulers could turn for legitimacy. The cycles that were developed to show the life and death of St Stefan-Simeon adopted a Byzantine style, but their interest in the use of a holy body as a focus for a new state ideology

Fig. 47
The Death of Anna Dandolo, *c.*1260. Wall painting. Narthex of Sopoćani, Serbia

Fig. 48
Dish with the Ascension of Alexander the Great, made for the Artuqid ruler Rukn ad-Daula abu Sulayman Da'ud, 1114–44. Copper gilt with enamel, diameter 26.5 cm

Tiroler Landesmuseum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Austria

Fig. 49
Headpiece from the Reading for the Feast of the Annunciation showing Christ Emmanuel, from the Lectionary of Hetum II, 1286.

Matenadaran, Armenia, MS 979, folio 295r

owes much more to Western, especially Venetian, art.[12] The paintings at Sopoćani (*c.*1260) demonstrate the presumption of the new dynasty. In one image, which is directly modelled on images of the Koimesis (the falling asleep of the Virgin), Anna Dandolo, the Venetian wife of Stefan the First Crowned, takes the place of the Mother of God, and her son, King Stefan Uroš (the patron of the monastery) that of Christ (fig.47).

The fracturing of Byzantine hegemony in the Balkans was repeated in the east, where Byzantine power was gradually replaced by that of the Seljuq Turks. At the end of the twelfth century, Georgia enjoyed a brief period when it exploited the decline of Byzantine power and a short hiatus among the Seljuqs to expand its territory, taking over much of Armenia. The series of great churches that were constructed at this time, such as Timotesubani, probably built by the leader of the Georgian army that helped establish Trebizond as a separate Greek empire after 1204, contain many Byzantine elements, but its vision of the overall order of the cosmos, as represented by the hierarchy of saints and prophets in its paintings, places the ascension of the Cross at its summit, rather than Christ.[13] This was a central theme in Georgia since the conversion of the country in the fourth century, which had been marked by the erection of three monumental crosses.

Nevertheless, the growing power of Muslim states in the region is increasingly reflected in art. The Innsbruck dish, made for the Artuqid ruler Rukn ad-Daula abu Sulayman Da'ud in the early twelfth century (fig.48), and sometimes linked to Georgia, reveals the complex web of Byzantine, eastern Anatolian and Islamic motifs that were combined to appeal to this ruler in south-eastern Turkey.[14] A similar intermixing of motifs is evident in Armenian art from this point as

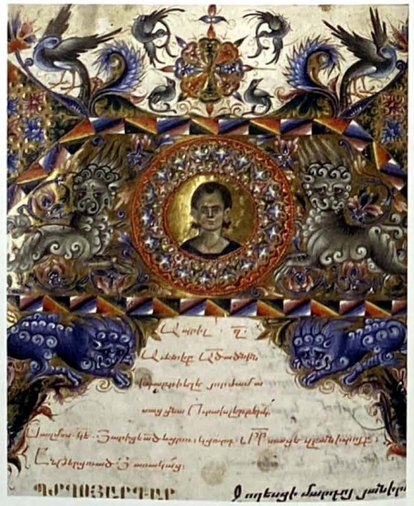


Fig 50
The Annunciation and a polo match, on a basin made for Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, *c.*1247–49. Brass inlaid with silver, diameter 50 cm

Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 55.10

well. Armenian craftsmen were involved in the building of many Seljuq buildings, including mosques and medreses, and their work is evident in both their construction techniques and the decorative motifs that they employ. At the same time Armenian religious architecture began to adopt much of the decorative vocabulary of Seljuq buildings, notably their emphasis on portals with geometric interlace designs.[15] This evidence of cultural exchange contradicts the picture of religious war and intolerance that most chronicles portray; but it can be supported by our knowledge of the extensive trade links across Anatolia. The movement of goods along the Silk Road did much more to unite the peoples east of Byzantium than wars did to divide them. In Cilicia, at the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean, a new Armenian kingdom grew in the thirteenth century which came to syncretise an even broader range of cultures into its art. Armenian Cilician art is now best known for its manuscripts, many of which name their artists, such as T'oros Roslin (fl.1256–68). These works show how they synthesised not only Byzantine and Islamic elements into their art, but also Western ideas introduced through the neighbouring Crusader states, such as the Franciscan Madonna of Misericordia on the Feron-Stoclet leaf from the Marshal Oshin Gospels of 1274 (cats 297, 298), and even Chinese elements, such as the dragons and lions in a lectionary manuscript of 1286 (fig.49). These motifs had travelled west with the Mongols, and were encountered by the Armenians who, with the Franciscans, tried unsuccessfully to convert the Mongols to Christianity.[16]

For the Syriacs and Copts, who lived permanently under Muslim rule, it is perhaps not so surprising to find strong Islamic influences in the figure style of the art that they produced. However, a less expected result is the inclusion

of Christian imagery in art made for local Muslim rulers, such as the scenes from the life of Christ that appear on a basin (fig. 50) commissioned by the Ayyubid Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub (1239–49).

The revived empire in Constantinople after 1261 never had the same political or military power as its predecessors, and its emperors could no longer use the Church as an instrument of foreign policy in the same way that they had before. This, paradoxically, allowed churches outside the empire to renew their interest in Byzantine art, which no longer had the diplomatic, almost colonial connotations of previous centuries. In the fourteenth century, a time when any Byzantine aspirations for international power were little more than fantasies, Byzantine art itself was resurgent. The doors from the al-Mu'allaqa church in Cairo (cat. 307) show a renewed interest in Byzantine iconography, combining them with Mamluk elements. The angular style that predominated under the Palaiologan emperors was widely disseminated and imitated, especially in the Balkans and Georgia. Once more Byzantine artists were in demand abroad. For instance, Theophanes the Greek (Feofan Grek) worked in Novgorod and Moscow at the end of the fourteenth century (fig. 51) and became the mentor of Andrei Rublev, the most famous Russian icon painter of the fifteenth century.[17] While his work continued the Byzantine tradition, it can equally be seen as the beginnings of a distinct new Russian idiom. However, the functions for which this art was used were entirely born of Byzantine origins: the late fifteenth-century embroidery showing a processional icon includes identifiable Muscovites, but the central figure holding the icon is re-enacting an eleventh-century Constantinopolitan practice (cat. 266).[18]

In the final decades before the Fall of Constantinople in 1453, the empire was politically just a faint shadow of what it had been 400 years earlier, yet its artistic presence beyond Byzantium remained formidable. It was no longer in a position to export its art wholesale as it had in the tenth century, and there was less homogeneity between the art of all the neighbouring states, which now had well-established indigenous artistic traditions. Nevertheless, their deep debt to Byzantine art remains evident.

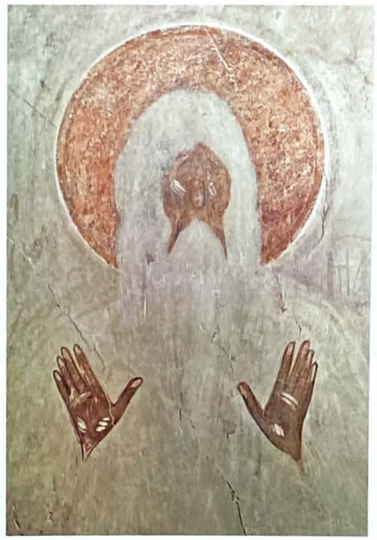


Fig. 51
Feofan Grek, *St Makarios*, 1378. Wall painting. Church of the Transfiguration, Novgorod

266

Embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria

Moscow (?), 1498 (?)
Taffeta and damask, embroidered with gold and silver threads, 95.1 × 98 cm

State Historical Museum, Moscow (15455 shch/R.B.-5)

267 ←

Embroidered image of St George

Moldavia, 1500
Gold, silver and silk threads on red silk, transferred to red velvet, 125 × 97 cm

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, inv. 75062

268 →

Mosaic panel of St Stephen

c.1108–13
Mosaic, gold, glass and stone tesserae on plaster, 233 × 134 × 11 cm

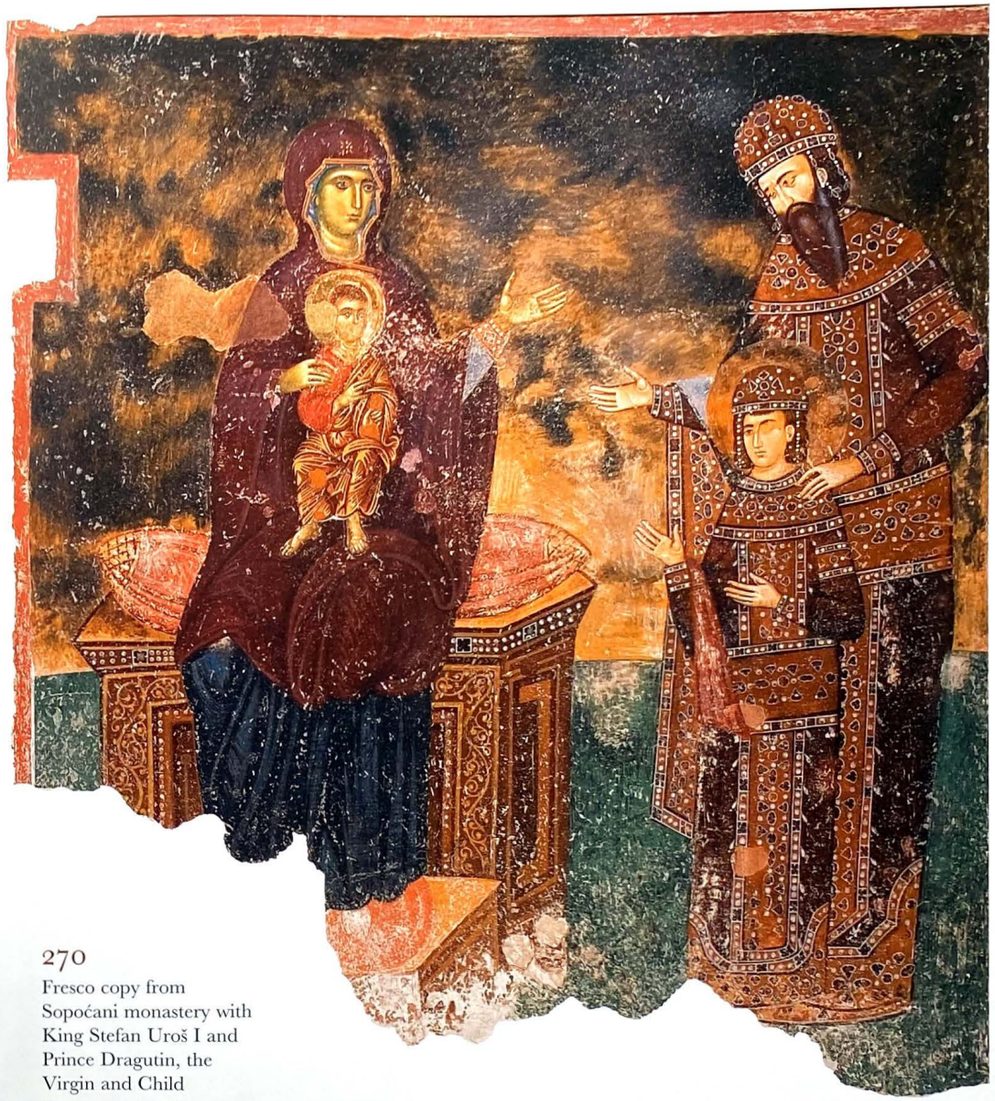
St Sophia of Kiev, National Conservation Area

269

Fresco copy from the King's Church, Studenica monastery, with patrons and saints

1314 (copied by Svetislav Mandić, 20 January 1964)
Tempera on canvas, 218 × 180 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 704



270

Fresco copy from Sopoćani monastery with King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin, the Virgin and Child

Third quarter of the thirteenth century (copied by Časlav Colić, 20 December 1987)
Tempera on canvas, 138 × 350 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 1322

271.1–4

Enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century
Cloisonné enamel and gold,
5.9 × 5.5 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm;
5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.3 × 5.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade,
inv. nos 202, 201, 200, 203

272
Bracelet
Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.5 cm; diameter 6.6 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 309

273
Bracelet
Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.1 cm; diameter 6.6 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 312

274
Bracelet
Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 2.4 cm; diameter 6.8 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 310

275
Bracelet
Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver, cast, wrought, twisted, granulation, filigree, height 2.7 cm; width 8.9 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 314

276
Queen Theodora's ring
Serbia, before 1332
Gold, niello, height 2.9 cm; width 2.3 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 342

277
Ring
Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver, cast, twisted, granulation, filigree; height 3 cm; width 2.5 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 318

278
Buckle of Prince Petar of Hum
Goldsmith's workshop in Split, 1220s
Gold, 5.1 × 5.4 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 225

279
Dušan's cup

Serbia, 1345–55
Silver, gilded, cast, engraved, height 3.6 cm; diameter 18.6 cm; width with handle 20.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2001

280
Cup

Serbia, fifteenth century
Silver, gilt, cast, chased, punctuated, engraved, soldered, 5.6 × 15 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2958

281

Royal doors with the Annunciation

Serbia, second half of the fourteenth century
Tempera (?) on wood, relief, woodcarving, 128 × 62.5 × 5.4 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 3415

282 →

Fragment of a reliquary

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Carved wood, chased silver, 4.4 × 3.3 × 0.9 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 317

283 ↘

Earrings

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, gemstones, cast, faceted, hammered, filigree, 6.9 × 7.2 cm (setting); 4 × 7.4 cm (fragment)
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 308

284 ↓

Head ornament

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, gemstones, beaten, filigree, semi-precious stones, length 23 cm; width 2 cm
National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 316

285 ←

Stone khatchkar of Aputayli

Noraduz cemetery in Sewan, near Lake Sevan, northern Armenia, 1225
Tufa (stone), 175 × 100 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1977, 5-5.1

286 →

Paten (diskos) with scenes of the Passion of Christ

Central Asia, ninth or tenth century
Gilded, cast, chased and incised silver, diameter 23 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. 6034

287 ←

Gospels with Tsar Ivan Alexander, folio 272*v*

Turnovo, 1355–56
Tempera and gold on parchment, 35.5 × 25 cm

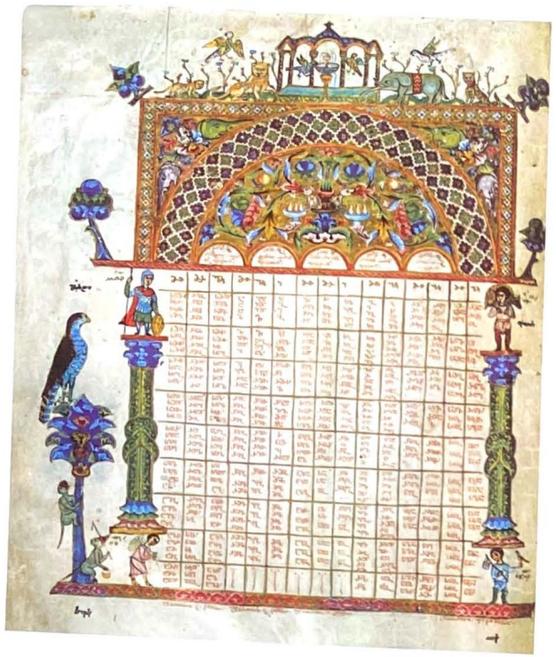
The British Library, London, Add. 39627

288 ↑

Fragments of the robe of Tsar Ivan Alexander

Byzantium, 1331–71
Silk-based textile embroidered with silver-gilt, silver and silk threads, 8.5 × 49 cm; 8.5 × 48 cm; 8 × 46.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 5844

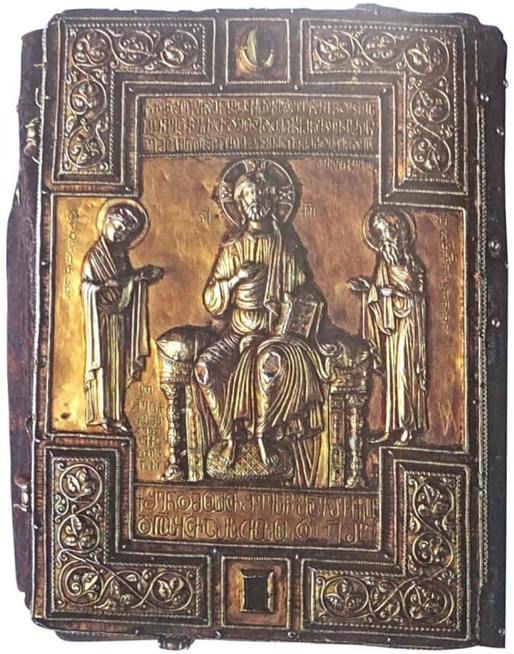


289 ↑

The Vani Gospels, folio 3*v*

Constantinople, *c.* 1200
Manuscript, 28.5 × 19.5 cm;
247 folios

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, A1335



290 ↗

Covers of the Tsqarostavi Gospels

Tao-Klarjeti (south-west Georgia),
1195
Manuscript with silver-gilt covers,
24.5 × 16.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-907

291 →

Covers of the Tbeti Gospels

Shavsheti (south-west Georgia),
late twelfth century
Manuscript with silver gilt covers,
26.7 × 19.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-929

292 ←

Four Gospels with Christ, donor and scribe, folio 13 verso

Produced in 1342 at the Monastery of Drazark in Cilicia during the prelacy of Ter Mkhitar, and Ter Basilios, at the request of the priest Tiratsu, and illuminated by Sargis Pidsak

Parchment, written in regular *bolorgir* script in black ink, 20.5 × 14.5 cm; 350 folios

On loan from the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Arm. MS 614

293 ↑

The Armenian Psalter of King Levon III, folio 3*v*–4*r*

Sis, the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1283.
Illuminated by Sargis Pidsak

Vellum; written in *bolorgir* script, 24 × 17.5 cm; 259 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 13804

294 ←

STEP'ANOS VAHKATSI
(1230–95)

Breviary of King Levon III of Cilician Armenia, folio 107

Sis, the capital city of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (?), 1269–89
Copied for King Levon III (1269–89), son of Het'um (1226–69)
Parchment, written in *bolorgir* script, 16.5 × 13 cm; 190 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 13993

295 →

Four Gospels with a serpent curled around a trunk, folio 218r

Sis in the Kingdom of Armenian Cilicia, 1217
Oriental paper, 25.9 × 19 cm; 286 folios

The Syndics of Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 2620

296 ←

T'OROS ROSLIN (fl. 1256–68), possibly with a collaborator or assistant

Gospel-book of T'oros the Priest, folio 109*v*

1262, with seventeenth-century binding
Ink, paint and gold on parchment, 29.5 × 22 cm (20 × 13.6 cm); 410 folios + 2 flyleaves, one at the beginning and one at the end, each from earlier manuscripts

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W.539

297 →

Manuscript with donor before the Madonna della Misericordia

Sis, Cilicia, 1274

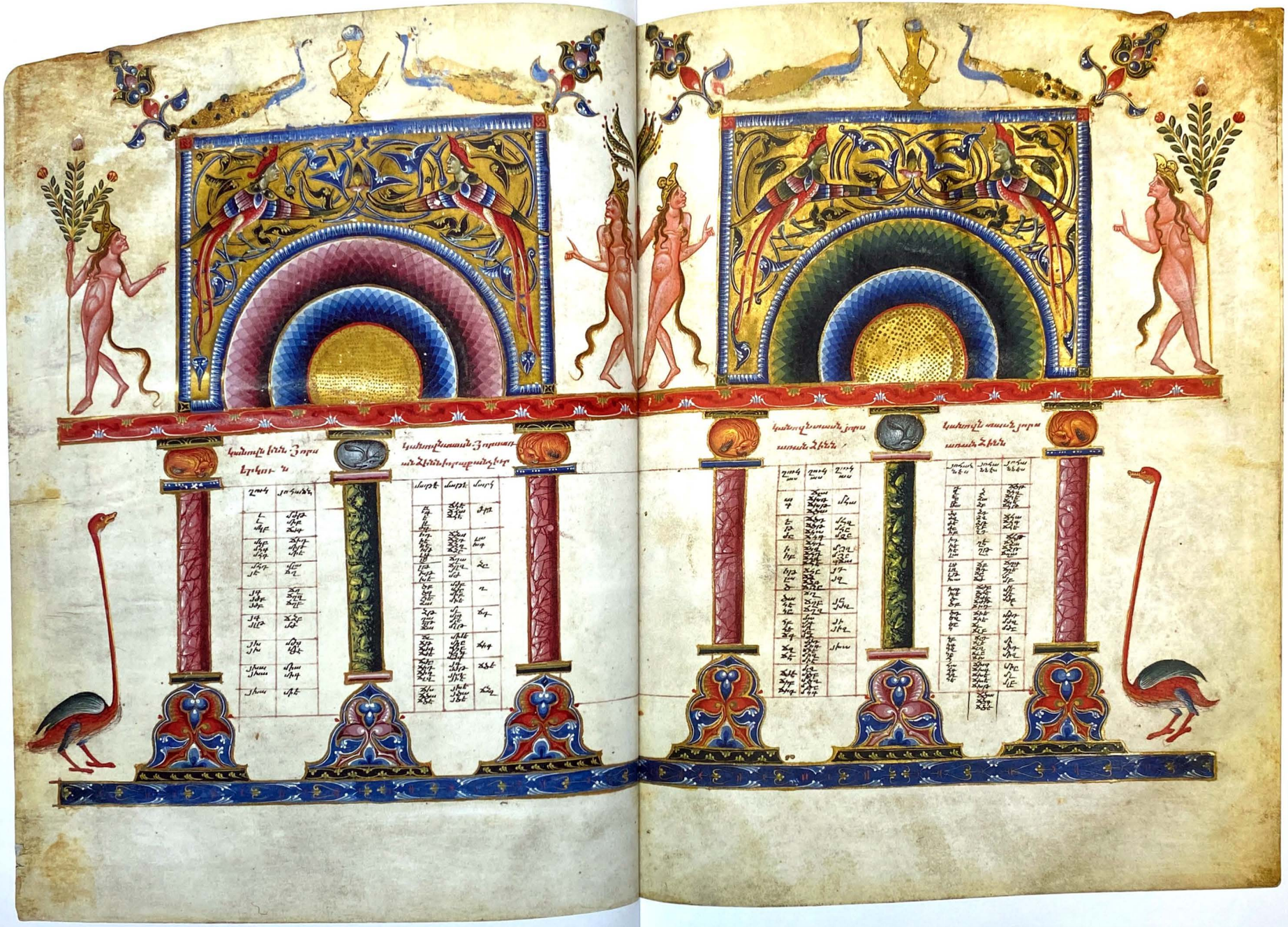
The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1998 with the help of the Fellows Acquisition Fund, the Institute de Recherche sur les Miniatures Armeno Byzantines, the Manoogian Simone Foundation, the L. W. Frohlich Charitable Trust, in memory of L. W. Frohlich and Thomas R. Burns, in recognition of their interest in and contributions to the arts of the written word, the Hagop Kevorkian Fund, Kaloust P. and Emma Sogoian, Antranig and Varsenne Sarkissian, and an anonymous donor, in memory of Sirarpie Der Nersessian. Acc. no. MS M.1111

298 →→

Marshal Oshin's Gospels, folio 4*v*–5*r*

Sis, Cilicia, 1274
Parchment, 29 × 21.2 cm; 320 folios

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1928, acc. no. MS M.740



299 ↑

Four Gospels with the Virgin and Child and donor and Mary Magdalene, folio 257

Village of Shikbak in the region of Tayk, in the Church of St Sargis, 8 September 1313
Paper, written in large *bolorgir* script, 32 × 23 cm; 259 folios

The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, inv. no. Arm. 10

300 →

Miniature with St Luke and Theophilos, folio 3*r*

Monastery of Grner (?), Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, thirteenth century
Parchment, 26 × 17 cm

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, McClean MS 201 3a

301 →→

Four Gospels with Christ Blessing, folio 69*v*–70*r*

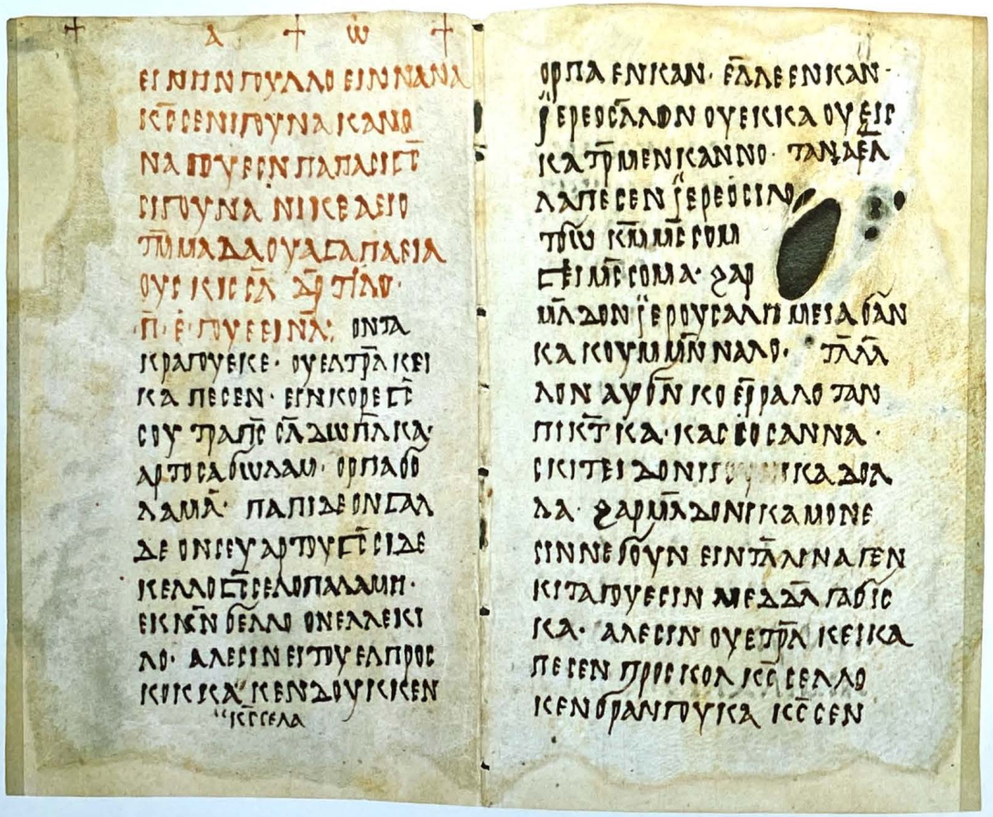
Cilicia, 1239
Paper, 23 × 12 cm; 111+230+111, folios

The Bible Society and the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, BSMS 77

302

A Miracle of St Menas,
folio 10*v*–11*r*

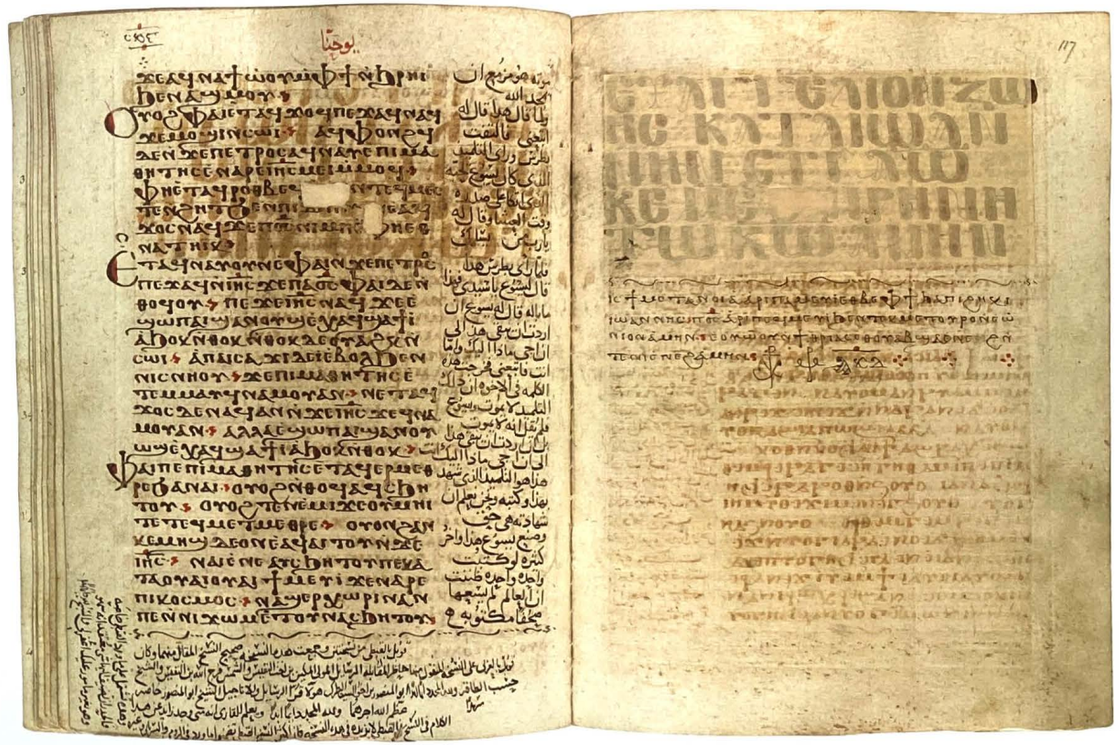
Nubia, 1053
Parchment, 15.5 × 10 cm; 18 folios
The British Library, London, Or. 6805



303

The Four Gospels with
title page of St Matthew's
Gospel, folio 116*v*–117*r*

Nitria, 1308
Paper, 26.5 × 19.7 cm; 166 folios
The British Library, London, Or. 425



304 ←

Gospel lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre and Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene, folio 160

Syria or Mesopotamia, around 1220
Tempera on paper, bold estrangelo script, 47 × 36 cm; 264 folios

The British Library, London, Add. 7170

305 →

A book of homilies, folio 1*v*

Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of Cairo, 689–90
Parchment, 37 × 27.5 cm; 28 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6781z

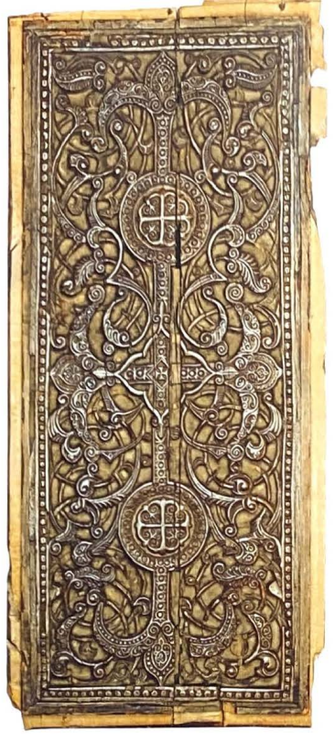
306

Fragments of a dish

Syria, end of thirteenth–first half of fourteenth century
Yellowish paste, white slip, painted with blue, black, turquoise and brown under transparent greenish glaze, maximum length 31 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 823

1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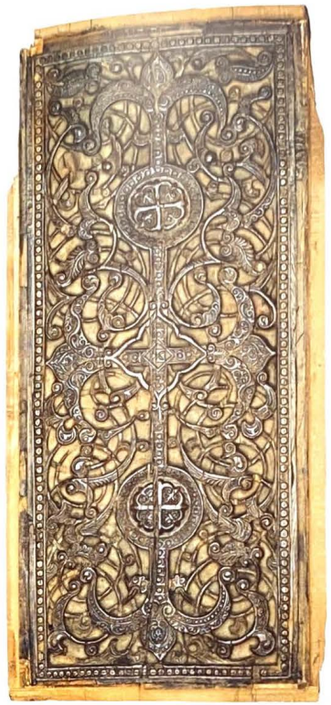

4

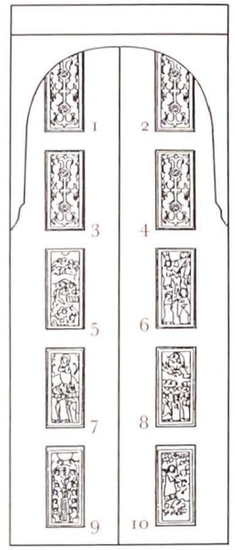
307

Door panels from the Church of the Virgin, al-Muʿallaqa, Old Cairo

*c.*1300

Cedarwood, approximately 31 × 13.1 × 2.5 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, MLA 1878,1203,1.10



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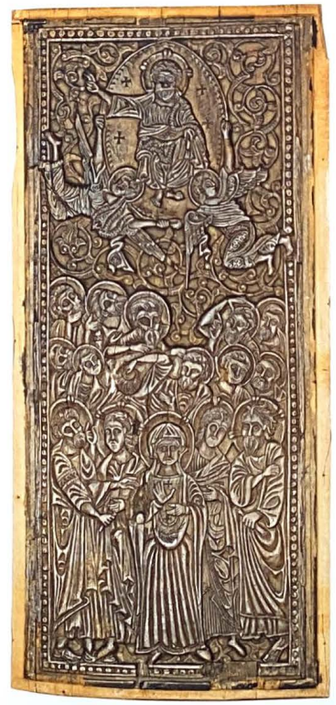
6

7


8

9

10

308 ←
Casket

Norman Sicily, twelfth century
Ivory, painted and gilded, gilt copper hinges, 9 × 11.2 × 7.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10647

309 ↖
Candlestick

Konya, second half of thirteenth century
Brass, cast, engraved and inlaid with silver, 20.1 × 19.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13943

310 →
Lustre painted bowl with giraffe

Egypt, late tenth–early eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 749

311 ↘
Bowl with leopard and trainer

Egypt, eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11119

312 →
Lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer

Egypt, eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 28 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 296

9

The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

MARIA VASSILAKI AND ROBIN CORMACK

Detail of cat. 315 ⇐

'The Glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai', EXODUS XXIV, 16

THE GROUP OF ICONS SHOWN HERE focuses on a major Orthodox monastic centre founded in the Byzantine period and still active to this day: the Monastery of St Catherine on the peninsula of Sinai (fig. 52). Sinai is associated with well-known Old Testament events. According to the Book of Exodus (III, 1–5), it was on Mount Horeb and at the foot of Mount Sinai that Moses, while tending the flock of his father-in-law, saw the Burning Bush and heard the voice of God asking him to remove his sandals. Later in the same book (XXIV, 16) God appeared to Moses at Sinai, again on Mount Horeb, and delivered to him the Ten Commandments. The Prophet Elijah is also associated with Sinai, as he took refuge in a cave on Mount Horeb.

It is perhaps not surprising that such a holy place attracted hermits, who inhabited the area as early as the second or third centuries AD. Pilgrims arrived in the following centuries and the well-known account of the Spanish nun Egeria, who visited Sinai in 383 and 384, is far from unique.[1] According to tradition, in the first decades of the fourth century Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, erected a small church close to the site of the Burning Bush, and a pilgrims' shelter, from which a tower remains to this day. The growing importance of the site is clearly reflected in the decision of the Emperor Justinian to erect a fortified monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai on the site of the Burning Bush in the mid-sixth century.[2] This monastery was dedicated to the Virgin of the Bush, and its main church, the so-called *katholikon*, in the form of a three-aisled basilica, seems to have been dedicated to Christ. The *katholikon* has preserved many of its sixth-century features, among them the mosaic of the Transfiguration in the conch of the apse, the wooden carved doors that lead from the narthex to the main nave and the wooden roof beams. A supplication to the Emperor Justinian and to the memory of his wife, the Empress Theodora, in the form of a carved inscription in one of these beams allows us to date the building of the monastery precisely between 548 (the year of Theodora's death) and 565 (the year of Justinian's death). Another roof beam bears the carved supplications of the architect of the monastery, the Greek Stephanos, from nearby Eilat, and his family.

The Arab conquest of Egypt (640–42) brought the monastery into the Egyptian political orbit, in which it remains today. This reduced pilgrimages and caused a certain amount of decline, at least until the tenth century. The Muslims respected the monastery, and the Prophet Mohammed himself appears to have issued a deed for its protection in the form of an 'achtiname'. Moses is always recognised by the Muslims as a prophet and many pilgrims used to visit Sinai on their return from Mecca. The construction of a mosque within the monastery's walls, which was completed by 1106, clearly testifies to the popularity of the place among Muslims, which persists today.

The monastery was already attractive for pilgrims as an Old Testament *locus sanctus*. The fact that it was the repository of the body of St Catherine added to this. We cannot be certain when the body of the saint was discovered on the top of the mountain which bears her name and when it was brought inside the monastery. The translation of St Catherine's relics from Sinai to Rouen in Normandy in 1063 gives us a *terminus ad quem*. The relics of the saint that the monastery possessed were placed in a marble sarcophagus to the north of the diakonikon, to the south of the main sanctuary, where they started to exude oil miraculously. The earliest reference to the veneration of St Catherine at Sinai is to be found in the typikon, which Symeon, Abbot of Sinai, drew up in 1214; the presence of her relics and the oil miraculously exuded from them are documented in twelfth-century sources.[3]

The Latin practice of pilgrimage to Sinai, which had started in 384 with Egeria and was continued by the so-called Piacenza pilgrim (*c.*570), who also wrote a diary, and others, was to become widespread over the centuries.[4] It reached its climax in the thirteenth century, as, from 1099, Sinai had become part of the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. This and the rise of the cult of St Catherine in the West are the two main factors that appear to have contributed to the popularity of Sinai to Western or Latin pilgrims. The flow of pilgrims to Sinai is well documented in the extant number of pilgrim guides and pilgrim narratives.[5] This was temporarily interrupted after the Fall of Acre in 1291 but was to be continued a few decades later on a smaller scale. In the thirteenth century Venice secured the dependencies of Sinai in Crete, Cyprus, Antioch, Latakia, Jerusalem and elsewhere. Latin pilgrims could now use Venice as a transit station and travel with Venetian ships to Jaffa or Alexandria. Latin pilgrimage to Sinai increased in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, as is documented by numerous accounts of pilgrims, while Orthodox pilgrimage was sparse.[6]

Fig. 52
General view of the Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

The Monastery of St Catherine today houses a most impressive number of icons. The collection represents all periods of Byzantium and later. In 1938 the eminent Greek scholars George and Maria Soteriou were invited by the monastery to compile a list of its icons. Almost twenty years later they published their pioneering book on the icons of Sinai, in two volumes.[7] Between 1956 and 1965 an expedition to Sinai was organised by the Universities of Princeton, Michigan and Alexandria and headed by Kurt Weitzmann. This gave an inventory of 2,048 icons and an impressive first volume on the early icons of Sinai.[8]

Some of the icons at Sinai date from as early as the mid-sixth century and may have been donated by the Emperor Justinian himself. As it was under Egyptian rule during iconoclasm (730–843), the monastery experienced no acts of violation against its holy icons. Four of the early icons were taken by the Russian Archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij from Sinai to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century.[9] Today they belong to the Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art.[10] Two of these, the Virgin and Child (cat.314) and SS. Sergios and Bacchos (cat.313), are exhibited here. Still in the monastery are the three larger encaustic icons of Christ, of the Virgin and Child enthroned between archangels and saints, and of St Peter; a number of scholars have proposed that these were gifts to the monastery from the Emperor Justinian.[11] Thomas F. Mathews has recently argued that the Kiev icon of SS. Sergios and Bacchos was also a gift from Justinian in the mid-sixth century.[12] Attractive though these suggestions are for giving a possible reconstruction of the nature of the decoration of the Sinai monastery at the time of its construction, they remain speculative and depend on stylistic datings (with little comparative evidence) and on the idea that Constantinople had already become the main centre of production of high-quality painting, and that icons such as these were not produced in the regions. This remains problematic, for it is possible that Syria, one of the cult centres of SS. Sergios and Bacchos, was producing high-quality art in this period (see the Antioch Chalice, cat.19), as were other regions in the Byzantine Empire.

The majority of icons shown here date from the late twelfth and the thirteenth centuries. Some are closely associated with Sinai, such as Moses receiving the Ten Commandments with the Burning Bush just before his feet (cat.316). The icon with the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos (cat.323) is also linked with Sinai: the text of the Heavenly Ladder was written in the seventh century by the Sinaitic monk and later abbot of the monastery whose name it bears. The icon of St George with scenes from his life (cat.315) belongs to a special type of icon (a cult image of a saint surrounded by scenes showing his or her miracles) that is better represented at Sinai than anywhere else. This icon has an inscription giving the name of its donor – a priest-monk John from Georgia in the Caucasus. Pilgrims and monks who joined the community came from near and far to Sinai. Five of the icons from Sinai form a group (cats 318–322), and we believe that four of these, those with the Archangels Michael and Gabriel and the Apostles Peter and Paul, belonged to a Deisis register in an iconostasis to which the royal doors (cat.322) with the Annunciation also belonged. The epistyle with scenes of the major festivals of the church was also made to decorate the screen of a chapel in the monastery or perhaps the screen of the main church (*katholikon*) of the monastery (cat.317). The question surrounding these Middle Byzantine icons now at Sinai is how did works of such great quality and importance come to be found in such a remote location? Were they made in Constantinople and then transported over the desert, or did artists come and work on site? What is certain is that Sinai was a place of such sanctity and reverence that some of the best art of the period might have been seen as especially appropriate for devotion and worship within its walls.

Very few of the icons at Sinai bear inscriptions with the names of their painters. The earliest name of a painter to appear on an icon at Sinai is that of Ioannis, a Sinaitic monk. The exact date of his activity is not given but he can be placed at the beginning of the twelfth century on the stylistic evidence of the work that bears his signature, a hexaptych with Menologion scenes, the Last Judgement, scenes from the Miracles and the Passion of Christ and a series of renowned iconographic types of the Virgin.[13] The names of the painters Stephanos and Petros are left on icons which have been dated to the thirteenth century. There is no evidence to suggest that any of them was a monk at Sinai.

One of the icons signed by the painter Stephanos is exhibited here (cat.316), but recent study has raised doubts on its thirteenth-century dating and consequently on the interpretation of Stephanos as a painter. The subject of these two icons is purely Sinaitic as one of them shows the Prophet Elijah fed by a raven and the other the Prophet Moses standing before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law (cat.316). Georgi Parpulov has argued against the thirteenth-century date previously proposed, and doubts that the signature on the icon, written in Greek and Arabic, means that he

Fig. 53
The painter Petros, icon with the Virgin Blachernitissa, Prophet Moses and Patriarch Euthymios II of Jerusalem, *c.*1223. Egg tempera on wood, 45.4 × 37.5 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai, Collection of Icons

Fig. 54
Martinus de Vilanova,
altar panel with
St Catherine, 1387.
Egg tempera on
wood, 127.3 × 56.5 cm

Monastery of St Catherine,
Sinai, Collection of Icons

is the painter.[11] Instead he states that the styles of the painting and the Arabic script belong to the second half of the eleventh century, and that Stephanos was claiming to be only the donor. This conclusion needs further discussion, as the inscriptions in both languages in the Moses icon refer to 'Stephanos who painted your likeness' (in Greek) and 'Stephanos who painted your virtues' (in Arabic). All commentators have assumed that these two large icons were made at the Sinai monastery itself.

The painter Petros is better documented, as he left his name on four icons at Sinai.[15] In all four the type of his signature appears in the form of 'Prayer of Petros the painter', and thus it is obvious that he was their donor too. A firm date of his presence at Sinai is given by one of these icons (fig.53), on which the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Euthymios II, is depicted together with the Virgin Blachernitissa and the Prophet Moses. The patriarch is called 'blessed' in the inscription above his head, signifying that he was already dead when the panel was painted. Euthymios died during his visit to Sinai and his tombstone survives in the north-east corner of the *katholikon*, bearing the date 13 December 1223. It follows that the icon depicting Patriarch Euthymios must have been painted shortly after his death.

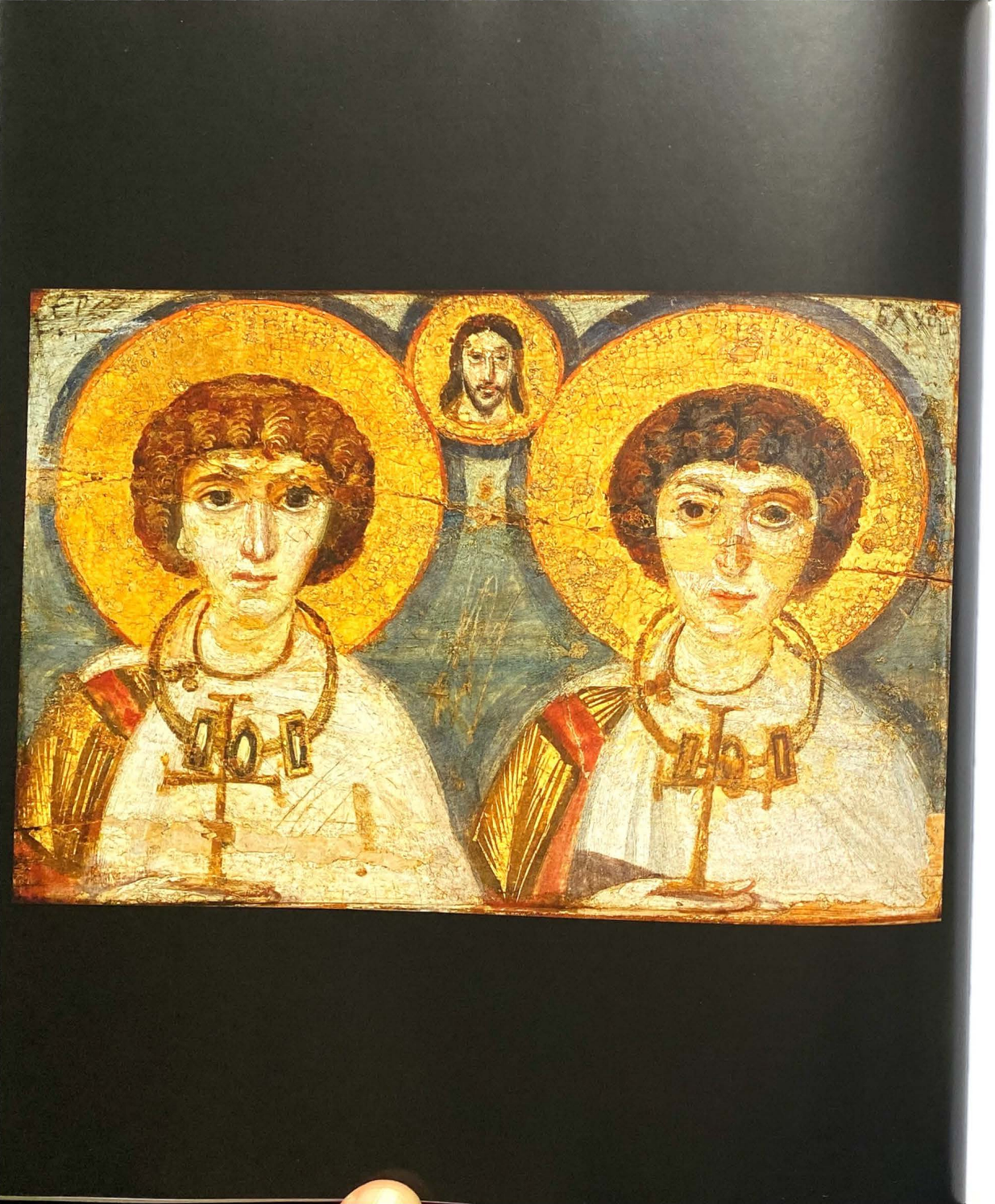
The diversity of the collection at Sinai is clearly illustrated by an altar panel depicting St Catherine (fig.54). An inscription in Old Catalan gives the date 1387 and the name of the donor, the Catalan consul in Damascus, Bernardo Maresa, who commissioned the work in Barcelona. The name of the painter, Martinus de Vilanova, is written on the back.[16]

An impressive number of icons dating from the thirteenth century have adopted Western elements to such a degree that Kurt Weitzmann was led to assume that they were painted at Sinai by Crusader artists who settled in the monastery at that time.[17] This view has been challenged, but what still remains uncertain is the nationality of the painters who managed to execute icons in a thoroughly Western style (fig.55). Syria, Palestine, Cyprus and Acre have been proposed as possible places where they may have worked.[18]

The close connection between Sinai and the Sinaitic metochion (dependency) of St Catherine, in Candia (modern Herakleion), Crete, which was under Venetian control from 1210 to 1669, is reflected in the icons still surviving in the monastery to this day. The earliest of these date from the first half of the fifteenth century and bear the signature of renowned Cretan painters of the period, such as Angelos Akotantos (fl.*c.*1425–50) and Andreas Ritzos (1421–92).[19] Cretan icons from later centuries are far more numerous but they fall outside the scope of this book. The impact that Sinai had on Cretan painters is clearly reflected in the two views of Mount Sinai which Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known today as El Greco, painted between *c.*1565 and 1570: one for the Modena triptych and a second for the panel now in the Historical Museum of Crete in Herakleion.[20]

Fig. 55
Crusader artist,
tritpych with the
Virgin and Child
Enthroned and scenes
from the Life of
Christ and the Virgin,
mid-thirteenth
century. Egg tempera
on wood, central
panel 56.8 × 47.7 cm;
left wing 53.7 ×
21.7 cm; right wing
53.8 × 21 cm

Monastery of St Catherine,
Sinai, Collection of Icons



313
Icon with Christ with SS Sergios and Bacchos
Constantinople, sixth or seventh century
Encaustic and gold on pine, 28.5 × 40.8 cm
The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art, Kiev, inv. no. 11

314
Icon with the Virgin and Child
Constantinople, sixth century
Encaustic and gold on larch, 33.4 × 20.6 cm
The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Art, Kiev, inv. no. 112

315

Icon of St George and scenes of his life and miracles

Sinai (?), beginning of the thirteenth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso,
127 × 80.6 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

316

Icon of the Prophet Moses before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law

Sinai (?), late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso,
132.5 × 69.9 cm

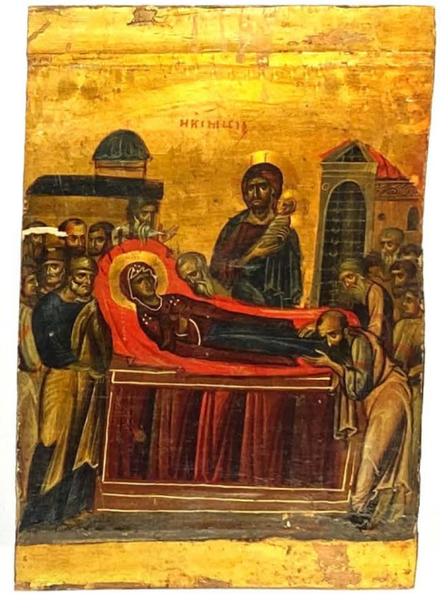
The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

317

Iconostasis beam with the Great Feasts and Deisis

Sinai (?), around 1200
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 152.3 × 38.7 cm; 25.8 × 38.5 cm (Koimesis of the Virgin)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai



318, 319

Deisis with St Peter and Archangel Michael

Sinai (?), thirteenth century
Tempera on wood,
105.7 × 71.1 cm (Peter);
105.5 × 75.5 cm (Michael)

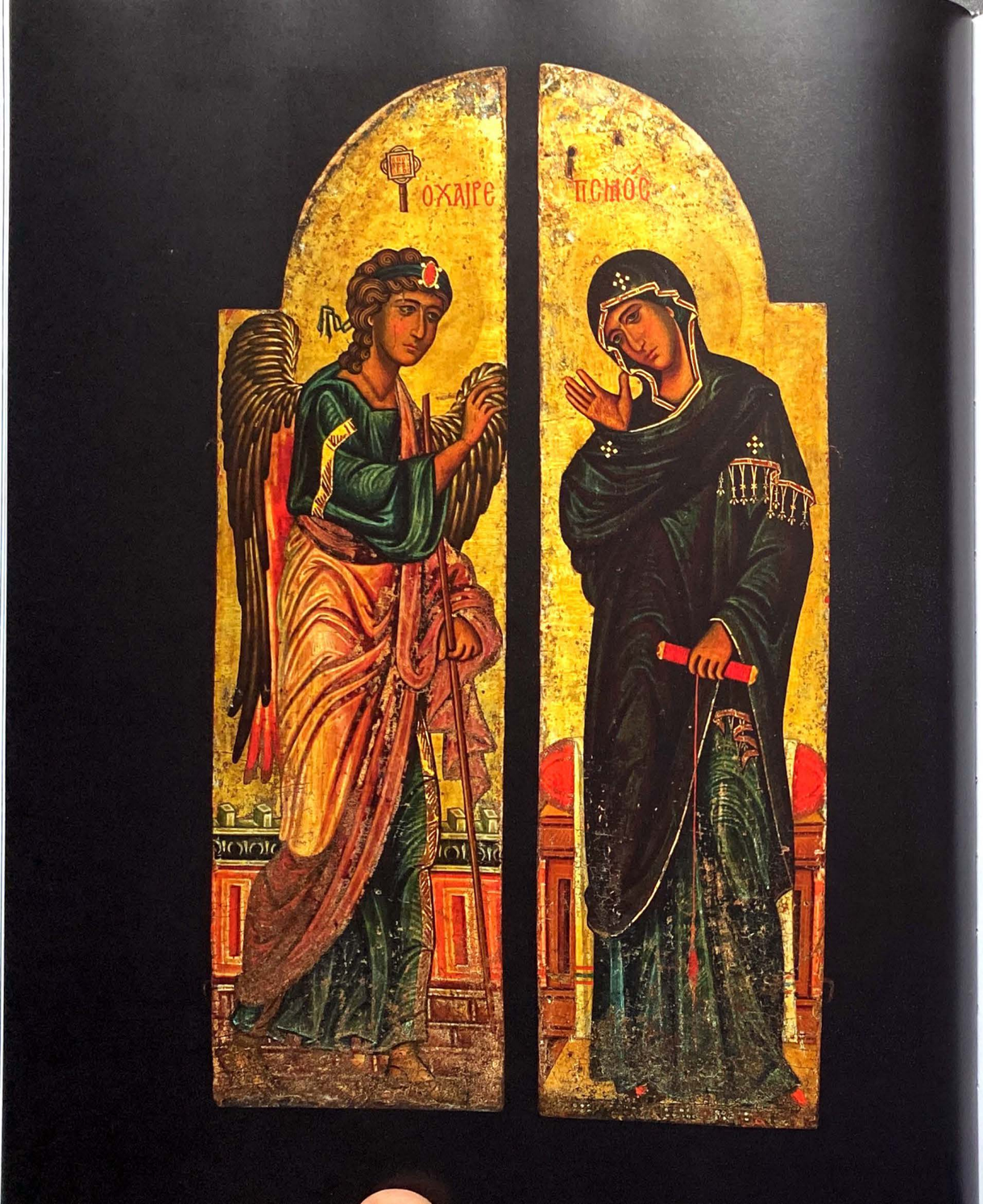
The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

320, 321

Deisis with Archangel Gabriel and St Paul

Sinai (?), thirteenth century
Tempera on wood,
105 × 75 cm (Gabriel);
104.3 × 69.8 cm (Paul)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai



322
Sanctuary door with Annunciation

Sinai (?), thirteenth century
Tempera on linen over wood, 120 × 34.3 cm and 118 × 32.2 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai, Chapel of the Four Martyred Soldiers

323
Icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos

Constantinople or Sinai, late twelfth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 41.1 × 29.1 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai

Catalogue entries

1
The Beginnings of Christian Art

1

Jonah Cast Up

Eastern Mediterranean, second half of the third century
Marble, 41.5 × 36 × 18.5 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L.Severance Fund, 1965.238

2

Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree

Eastern Mediterranean, second half of the third century
Marble, 32.3 × 46.3 × 18 cm

Cleveland Museum of Art, John L.Severance Fund, 1965.239
SELECTED REFERENCES: Wixom 1967; Fort Worth 2007, p.191

These two marble sculptures belong to a group of eleven small sculptures acquired in New York in 1965, said to have been found in south-west Asia Minor in one huge jar (Wixom 1967). The collection was of three pairs of male and female bust portraits and five symbolic pieces with Christian subjects. Each of the portraits seem to represent the same figures, presumably a husband and wife, and probably aristocratic Romans converted to Christianity with a taste for high-class sculpture. One of the symbolic pieces is a youthful Good Shepherd, a subject used in Early Christian art to represent Christ. The other four pieces are a praying figure, probably Jonah; Jonah swallowed by a great fish; Jonah cast up from the fish; and Jonah beneath the gourd tree.

According to the biblical Book of Jonah, God told Jonah to preach at Nineveh, but instead he fled by boat towards Tarshish. God sent a tempest and when the sailors discovered Jonah was the cause of the storm they threw him overboard. He was swallowed by a fish and repented inside its belly; after three days he was disgorged unharmed and rested under the gourd tree. Christ made a reference (Matthew XII, 40) to the story of Jonah as an Old Testament prefiguration of his own death and resurrection.

It has been proposed that this group was intended to ornament a house, fountain or a tomb, but the excellent state of the sculptures and the struts may mean that they were never finished for display. Jonah is shown bearded, and this is unusual. The style of his face is reminiscent of Greco-Roman traditions – it has been compared to the Laocoön, and this underlines the fact that the earliest Christian and Byzantine sculpture and painting develops directly out of the Classical tradition. The artist was especially imaginative in the visualising of the great fish.

ROBIN CORMACK

3

Table support with figure of the Good Shepherd

Asia Minor (?), mid-fourth century
Marble, 95 × 24 × 18 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, AΓ 2491
PROVENANCE: Thessaloniki, western cemetery, 'Axios' tomb complex
SELECTED REFERENCES: unpublished

This support was for an extravagant table. It has the image of the Good Shepherd on its main face, standing, wearing a short, sleeveless chiton and boots. He has short, curly hair and expressive eyes. His head is turned slightly to the right. In his left hand, now broken, he once held a shepherd's crook, and an animal sat at his feet.

The marble plaque, which was supported by this upright, has not survived. The roughly finished reverse side shows that the table was positioned against a wall. It was found broken in the entrance of a tomb complex dating from 350–400 (Makropoulou 1990, p.337); vessels and food, required for funerary rituals, would have been placed upon it by relatives of the dead.

Three such table supports with the Good Shepherd have been discovered in Thessaloniki (Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1985, no.27, pp.122–5), this being the only one found in a cemetery.

The piece probably comes from one of the marble tables made in workshops in Asia Minor in the third to fourth centuries. They were used in both private and public spaces (Stefanidou-Tiveriou 1990, p.205), though recent excavation finds show that they were also employed in Christian cemeteries.

The image of the young shepherd had its origins in the Moschophoros (calf-bearer) of Antiquity, later evolving into an allusion to the peaceful, pastoral life; in the third century it seems to have acquired a new meaning, symbolising Christ himself.

The Good Shepherd occurs in third- to fourth-century sarcophagus sculptures (Paderborn 2001, no.1.1, p.78), and also as freestanding pieces. At Thessaloniki the subject is found in four third- to fourth-century tombs painted with Old and New Testament themes (Marki 2006, nos 15, 49, 52, 89, figs 3a, 7a–c, 6a).

ANTIGONI TZITZIBASSI

4

Cameo with warrior horseman

First half of the fourth century
Carved, polished, multi-layered sardonyx, 15 × 19 × 2.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, 116/IV
PROVENANCE: accidental find at Mladenovac, Kusadak locality (environs of Belgrade)
SELECTED REFERENCES: Belgrade 1987, no.233 (J.Kondić), with quoted literature; Rimini 2005, no.184, p.316; Trier 2007, CD I.7.33

Only part of this large cameo, which was probably originally circular in shape, has been preserved. It depicts a warrior horseman riding triumphantly over his dead, captured or bound enemies. Darker shades of the exquisitely carved and polished stone are used for portraying the figures, then accentuating these against the milky-blue background. All the figures are set on the same plane, then this flat layer is 'applied' to the base stone. The central position belongs to the horseman astride his luxuriously equipped steed, who proudly tramples his enemies. The warrior holds the reins in his left hand, and he hurls a spear with his right. He is dressed in a tunic and armour, and a cloak billows out from his shoulders. His feet are clad in boots. Thick curls fall around his forehead and on top of these is a diadem indicating his royal rank.

In terms of style, the cameo belongs to the middle of the fourth century. Everything that is represented can also be seen in the battle scenes depicted on the porphyry sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum of Helena (the mother of Constantine the Great) that dates from the second quarter of the fourth century. It follows that the most likely identification of the rider is Constantine the Great (306–37). This dating is supported by the gold coins of 325/326, in which Constantine is also shown wearing a band round his head – perhaps an allusion to Alexander.

JELENA KONDIĆ

5

Head of Constantine I, the Great

325–30
Cast bronze, gilt, height 36 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, 79-IV
PROVENANCE: accidental find at Niš
SELECTED REFERENCES: Belgrade 1987, no.233 (J.Kondić); Rimini 2005, no.9, p.213; Trier 2007, CD I.8.3

This famous bronze head is part of the monumental gilded bronze statue of Constantine I (Gaius Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus), son of tetrarch Constantius I and Helena, who was born in Niš (Serbia), the famed ancient town of Naissus. This unique portrait illustrates some of Constantine's characteristics: the square angular jaw, the long curved nose, the hair worn like a cap, always with the soft, thick curls framing his face, and the complete absence of movement. The eyebrows are arched and set above large, almond-shaped eyes with pronounced eyelids. On his head Constantine wears the imperial diadem, which appears on coins from 324 on.

In this portrait sculpture, the style chosen is highly traditional, and the reason for this choice is to emphasise that Constantine is in the tradition of the great rulers of the past, such as Alexander the Great, Augustus or Trajan. There are no indications in the face that he was ultimately to be celebrated as the first Christian Roman emperor.

JELENA KONDIĆ

6

Fragment of a sarcophagus front with St Peter

Constantinople, last third of the fifth century
Proconnesian marble, 102 × 80 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no.3434
PROVENANCE: found near Alaçam, Turkey, 1889
SELECTED REFERENCES: Effenberger 1989; Peschlow 2005, pp.827 note 21, 830 note 33, 833–835 note 56, 836 notes 59, 60

This is the right side of a broken marble panel which was made as a sarcophagus front; the back of the panel has a flared Greek cross resting on a globe and stepped base. On the basis of the design and measurements of the cross, this side has been reconstructed as consisting of two symmetrical crosses around a central motif, suggesting the original size of the panel was eight Roman feet (233 cm) in length. This gives the size of the composition on the front face.

On the right is St Peter carrying a large Latin cross with flared ends on his shoulders and raising his right hand in a gesture of astonishment. He wears the typical garments of the Apostles – a tunic and a pallium – and sandals. The nose, now lost, was attached separately. A man walks to the left of Peter, stooping and with his head lowered. He is dressed in a short, girdled tunic and short boots. His arms have broken off, but the joins show that they were extended slightly.

The lost depiction may perhaps be reconstructed with the aid of a miniature in the purple codex from Sinope (cat.49). The image on fol. 29 represents the healing of the two blind men of Jericho (Matthew XX, 30–4). The bent walking figure in the relief would then be one of the blind men who begged Jesus to heal them. Jesus himself must have appeared towards the centre of the image. More Apostles would certainly have stood behind him on the left, witnessing, like Peter, a miracle that revealed Christ's divinity.

The relief was found in 1889 near the town of Alaçam, the Byzantine Leontopolis, on the Black Sea coast. This indicates that sarcophagus fronts were exported from Constantinople to the provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

ARNE EFFENBERGER

7

Relief with besieged city

Egypt, fifth century
Wood, 45 × 22 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, Berlin, inv. no.4382
PROVENANCE: acquired from Egypt, 1900
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1979, no. 69, pp.81–2 (R.Brilliant); Effenberger 1992, no.95, p.180

This enigmatic carved relief has its upper and lower frames intact, and may be one section of a sequence of scenes. To the left of the city gate the Byzantine army arrives at the city with a soldier carrying the labarum – the army standard adopted first by Constantine and displaying the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek, XP.

The same monogram is displayed in the sixth century on the shield of one of the soldiers in the mosaic with Justinian at San Vitale, Ravenna (fig.1). The enemy on horseback is being driven off or killed; their leaders wearing diadems hang on forked stakes outside the city wall on the right. The troops defending the city stand along the walls and above them are the buildings in the city. At the top on the left are monumental figures, possibly saints protecting the city (Brilliant, in New York 1979).

The difficulty in interpreting this victory scene is to decide whether it records some historical event, perhaps in the history of Egypt from where the relief comes, or whether it is biblical, but portrayed through Byzantine eyes. Similar realistic imagery of battle is found in the tenth-century Byzantine manuscript known as the Joshua Rotulus (Vatican Library, cod.pal.gr.431), which is also derived from Roman triumphal art such as the Column of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius in Rome or the Column of the emperor Arkadios erected in 400 at Constantinople. The tenth-century manuscript shows the many battles of Joshua in the Holy Land. Brilliant (New York 1979) points to the rescue of Gibeon (Joshua X), who defeated the five kings of the Amorites and hung their bodies on trees, as a possible identification.

ROBIN CORMACK

8

Part of a mosaic pavement with personifications of the months

Thebes, early sixth century
Stone and marble, 340 × 66 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis
PROVENANCE: excavated in Thebes
SELECTED REFERENCES: Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1987, no.96, 157–9, pls 255–64, with earlier bibliography; Hieronymos 2005, pp.57–8, figs 32–40

This is a part of a larger mosaic pavement found in fragmentary condition in Thebes. It probably comes from a rich private house (Lazaridis 1965, p.253, pls 310–14).

On three sides – east, west and north – is a rare type of frame, consisting of one wavy band through which pass two straight bands. On the east side the frame is interrupted by an inscription in a *tabula ansata*, in a fragmentary state:
... / ΑΤΟ ΜΟΡΦΗΝ / ... ΜΟΝΟΝ ΟΥΑ ΑΓΕ ΓΗΡΑC /
... ΧΝΗ ΠΑΝΤΑ ΤΕΛΕCCΕΝ ΑΠΕΡ ΝΟΟC
ΕΝΘΕΤΟ ΧΕΙΡΙ /
Because of the fragmentary state of the inscription, it cannot be completed securely. Only line 3 could be rendered freely as 'he executed all with his hand, as his mind dictated'.

The main subject consists of two panels, each with a different representation. In the north panel are four squares surrounded by a three-strand guilloche, each enclosing a personification of a month, identified by inscription and characterised by lively movement. February holds a pair of ducks, April a sheep, July sheaves of wheat, while the corresponding object held by May has been destroyed. In the south panel is a hunting scene in a rocky landscape, with a hunter and his hound pursuing prey, while a man with deformed features named Akkolos is shown with his back turned to this scene. This south panel is framed on the east and west sides by close-packed squares in vertical arrangement forming a chain, while on the north side, in place of the frame, is an inscription:
ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗC ΤΕ ΤΟ ΜΟΥCΙΟΝ ΠΟΕΙ
ΔΗΜΗΤΡΙΟC ΜΕΝ ΕΝΝΟΗCΑC ΤΗΝ ΓΡΑΦΗΝ
ΤΑΥΤΗC Δ ΥΠΟΥΡΓΟC ΕΠΙΦΑΝΗC
ΕΥΝΟΥCΤΑΤ(ΟC)
ΠΑΥΛΟC ΔΕ ΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΑΙΤΙΟC ΤΩΝ ΕΥΠΡΕΠΩ(C)
ΙΕΡΕΥC ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΘΕΙΩΝ ΛΟΓΩΝ ΔΙΔΑCΚΑΛΟC
(Demetrios and Epiphanes made the mosaic, Demetrios designed it, Epiphanes executed it with great care. Responsible for the whole work of art was Pavlos, priest and teacher of the divine word.)

The similarities between the Thebes mosaic and mosaics in the basilica at Delphi and the basilica of St Nicholas Hypate have led to the identification of a workshop of mosaicists in Central Greece (Sodini 1970, p.745; Spiro 1978, pp.209–11, 232–3, 305). The activities of this workshop, or at least its influence, extended to areas further afield, as is attested by the rare frame type with its undulating band passing through two straight lines, and the frame with the dense, vertically placed squares forming a chain pattern which are encountered in a building in Megalopoli, in the central Peloponnese (Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1980, p.240; Asimakopoulou-Atzaka 1987, p.74, no.17). The stylistic relationship between the mosaics in the building at Megalopoli, the basilica at Delphi and the building at Thebes is significant too, in the treatment of animals and, primarily, human figures. Outlines are emphasised and the details of the faces are rendered in the same manner: small mouths, boldly outlined eyes, noses with two lines. The personifications of the months and the hunting scenes were popular in early Byzantium and appear frequently on tessellated pavements (New York 1979, p.271).

The importance of the Thebes mosaic, which can be dated to the early sixth century, lies in the considerable artistic merit of the workshop to which it is attributed, and to the fact that it records the names of two mosaicists, Demetrios and Epiphanes. Surely leaders of a large team employed in various regions, they are among the very few named mosaicists known from the Early Byzantine period.

EUGENIA GEROUSSI-BENDERMACHER

9.1, 9.2

Tomb with wall paintings, including
Susanna and the Elders

Thessaloniki, early fifth century
Tomb and detached fresco, 202 × 144 × 107 cm; 170 × 127.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, BT 172-B
PROVENANCE: Thessaloniki, eastern cemetery
SELECTED REFERENCES: Mavropoulou-Tsioumi 1983; Marki 2006, pp. 183–6, figs 141–2, pls 24A, 67A

This fresco comes from a chamber tomb on whose western wall was portrayed the story of Susanna and the Elders. The tomb walls are divided into two areas, the lower decorated with representations of slabs, alternately scale- and rhomboid-patterned, and columns at the corners, which terminate in pine cones and are rendered half on one wall and half on the other. The slab on the eastern wall features a lattice of rhombi, while on part of what survives of the northern wall, above a scale-patterned slab, two trees are depicted. On the western, narrow side of the tomb, which hosts the main theme, above the scale-patterned slab and the columns, two wide bands, in green and orange, represent the ground and give depth to the painting.

The central scene is bordered left and right by two trees that lean slightly towards the centre, following the slope of the ceiling. In the middle of the picture, a female figure is depicted, upright, full face, her hair carefully arranged, her legs relaxed, with one of them extending beyond the border of the painting, resting on the slab. Her hands are raised in prayer. She wears a reddish-brown chiton and a dark-coloured dalmatic, and is framed left and right by two men shown in profile, dressed in chitons and himatia, turned towards her and regarding her harshly.

The painting depicts the Old Testament story of Susanna, whom two judges accused of adultery when she resisted their improper advances, demanding that she be put to death. Susanna threw up her hands and prayed to God for help; God sent Daniel to question the Elders, the slander was discovered and Susanna's good name was restored. The story of Susanna is an allegory for the Church's triumph against heresy.

EVANGELIA ANGELKOU

10.1–3

Three chair ornaments personifying Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria

Rome, after 324
Gilded silver, 18.7 × 7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1866.1229.21, 1866.1229.23, 1899.1229.24
PROVENANCE: Rome, found in 1793 as part of the Esquiline treasure
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, nos 352–5; London 1977, no. 97; New York 1979, no.155; Shelton 1981, nos 30–3; Cameron 1985, pp.140–1, Milan 1990, no.3b.2e; London 1994, nos 13–14

These chair ornaments are each composed of a hollow cast female figure attached to a socket having a soldering plate in the shape of a pendant leaf; one figure retains the mounting of the pin and safety chain. The three seated figures are identified as personifications of the cities of Rome, Constantinople and Alexandria; Antioch (not exhibited) is the fourth. The four form two pairs of right- and left-hand figures, respectively. Rome and Constantinople wear crested helmets, while the other two wear mural crowns, a type of garland awarded to the first Roman soldier to scale the walls of a besieged town. The ornaments' individual attributes vary. Rome holds an upright staff in one hand while the other rests on a shield; Constantinople carries a patera and a cornucopia; Alexandria holds sheaves of grain and rests her foot on a ship's prow; and Antioch, based on a famous work (of 296 BC) by the Greek sculptor Eutychides, holds fruits and sheaves of grain while a personification of the River Orontes emerges from beneath her. The foundation of the city of Constantinople in 324 provides a *terminus post quem* for the creation of these ornaments.

The grouping of personifications or tyches was associated with the emperor and Late Antique bureaucracy, and these ornaments may have been insignia of a civil or military office that has not been identified. The people who owned the Esquiline treasure, Turcius Secundus and Proiecta Turcii, belonged to a family whose members held various high positions in Rome. The four ornaments are thought to have been mounted on a sedan chair.

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

11

CRISTOFORO BUONDELMONTI (*c.*1385–*c.*1430)

Liber insularum archipelagi
(Book of the Islands of the Archipelago)

Ghent, 1482–85
Ink and paint on parchment, 36.5 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Arundel 93
PROVENANCE: Raphael de Marcatellis (1437–1508), abbot of St Bavon, Ghent; possibly Thomas Howard (1585–1646), 2nd Earl of Arundel, 4th Earl of Surrey and 1st Earl of Norfolk, art collector and politician; Henry Howard (1628–84), 6th Duke of Norfolk, presented to the Royal Society in 1667; the Royal Society, London; purchased by the British Museum, London, 1831
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hülsen 1905–06; Berlin 1989, no.14.33, p.855 (F.Reisinger and A.Schmidt-Burkhardt); London 2005*c*, no.227, p.434 (S.Bagci)

The first 'bird's-eye view' map of Constantinople was produced by an Italian visitor, Cristoforo Buondelmonti, in the early fifteenth century. Buondelmonti was a Florentine priest who travelled through Greece recording his observations in descriptions and maps (*figurata*). He dedicated the resulting work, the *Liber insularum archipelagi* (The Book of the Islands of the Archipelago), to Cardinal Giordano Orsini in 1420. This date and the dedication were embedded in an acrostic created by the first letter of each chapter: '*Cristoforus Bondelmot de Florencia Presbiter nunc misit cardinali Iordano de Ursinis MCCCCXX*' (Cristoforo Buondelmonti of Florence, priest, now sends to Cardinal Giordano Orsini 1420).

The illustrated text proved extremely popular, and numerous medieval copies survive. Two now in the British Library, London, are shown alternately in the exhibition: a small Italian copy, and a more lavish one made in Ghent for Raphael de Mercatellis (*c.*1437–1508), abbot of St Bavon, an illegitimate child of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, who assembled the first great humanistic library in Flanders.

Despite its title, the *Liber insularum* also includes a description of Constantinople, perhaps because the city was the centre of shipping in the region. Buondelmonti's map corresponds directly to his description of the city. For example, he notes that Constantinople is 'triangular' and comments on its strong surrounding walls. He emphasises the great height of the dome of the Church of St Sophia, which is clearly visible as the largest building in the city in both copies of the map. Other important sites, such as the Hippodrome (directly to the south of St Sophia), are also clearly visible and labelled. These maps are remarkable survivals of an eyewitness view of Constantinople before its capture by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

KATHLEEN DOYLE

2
From Constantine to Iconoclasm

12

The Projecta Casket, from the Esquiline treasure

Rome, between 330 and 380
Silver embossed and partially gilt, 28.6 × 55.9 × 43.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, MLA 1866.1229.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Shelton 1981, no.1, pp.72–5; Elsner 2007, pp. 200–24

The Projecta Casket is iconographically perhaps the richest surviving object of Late Antique silverware. Made in the form of two truncated rectangular pyramids, joined at their bases, every one of its nine exposed faces is decorated in the repoussé technique. Only on the back is gilding not used. The casket was probably employed for the toilet of the lady of a grand house. Its base depicts servants carrying accoutrements of the toilet in an arcade of alternately pointed and curved arches. At the centre and in the front sits the lady of the house pinning her hair with her right hand, while the maid to her left holds up a mirror. This gesture is emulated by the nude Venus in the mythological scene on the lid above, before whom a centaurotriton also holds up a mirror. On the top, in a wreath held by two cupids, the man and woman of the house appear in their finery. At the back of the lid is a domestic scene that has been interpreted as a procession to the baths or the procession of the bride to her wedding. An inscription, possibly contemporary with the object's making and certainly Late Antique, along the horizontal rim of the casket's lid at the front, reads '*Secunde et Proiecta vivatis in Chri[sto]*' (Secundus and Projecta, live in Christ). The confrontation of mythological imagery and Christian inscription is striking, while the use of the toilet of Venus to evoke bathing in the domestic context and to play against the casket's functions is witty.

JAS' ELSNER

13

Diptych with Clementinus

Constantinople, 513
Ivory, each leaf 37 × 12.5 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M 10036
PROVENANCE: in the collection of Joachim Negelein of Nurnberg (1675–1749), and in that of Count Mihály Wiczay of Hédervár (Hungary) before 1800, thence to Gábor Fejérváry in 1834; inherited by K. Pulszky who sold it in 1857, in 1867 Joseph Mayer left it to the city of Liverpool
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pulszky 1856, nos 29–30; Maskell 1875, pp.38–9; London 1923, no. 26; Delbrueck 1929, no. 16; London 1954, no. 13; Edinburgh 1958, no. 26; Volbach 1976, no. 15; New York 1979, no. 48 (J.C.Anderson); Cameron 1982a; Sanzeree 1984; Gibson 1994, no. 8; London 1994, no. 62 (A.Eastmond); Olovsdotter 2005, no. 10, pp.44–7

Every year on 1 January, the city of Constantinople appointed a consul to serve for one year (as did Rome). This was an honorary post, and the principal duty was to arrange a week of entertainments for the people of Constantinople, including a day of chariot-racing, two days of animal combats in the Hippodrome and two days of theatrical performances (*Constitutions of Justinian*: Scott 1932, p.17).

This diptych commemorates Clementinus, consul for 513. The two leaves, which duplicate their imagery, are full of messages about hierarchy, wealth and power. Clementinus sits enthroned on his lion-headed consular throne, with the attributes and dress unique to his position. His name and titles are spelled out in Latin (still the official language of the empire) in the *tabula ansata* at the top of each leaf: FL(AVIVS) TAVRVS CLEMENTINVS ARMONIVS CLEMENTINVS, V(IR) ILL(VSTRIS) COM(ES) SACR(ARVM) LARG(ITIONVM) EX CONS(VLE) PATRIC(IVS) ET CONS(VL) ORDIN(ARIVS) (Flavius Taurus Clementinus Armonius Clementinus, Illustrious Man, Master of the Sacred Largesse, former Consul, Patrician and Consul Ordinary; his name is also spelled out in Greek in the monogram above his head). He watches over boys pouring forth coins and ingots from sacks to demonstrate his abundant generosity. As Theoderic, Ostrogothic king of Italy, wrote to Felix, consul of Rome in 511: 'This is an occasion where extravagance earns praise...where one gains in good opinion all that one loses in wealth' (Cassiodorus, Var. III.2; cited in Cameron and Schauer 1982, p.139). To either side of Clementinus stand personifications of Rome and Constantinople. His apparent dominance is tempered only by his acknowledgement of two higher authorities, shown at the top of the leaves: Christ, represented by the Cross, and the imperial couple, Anastasios and Ariadne.

The diptych survived because it was reused in 772 in the Church of St Agatha in Rome to record Greek prayers commemorating the accession of Pope Hadrian I (772–95). These were incised on the reverse. Spaces at the bottom of the inscription were left for images to be glued to the surface: on the left was an image of John 'the least priest of the church of St Agatha' before the Mother of God, on the right Pope Hadrian I before St Agatha (Maskell 1875, pp.38–9). The fine marquetry frame probably dates to the eighteenth century, when the panels were mounted in reverse.

ANTONY EASTMOND

14

Ivory diptych leaf with a *venatio*

Rome or northern Italy, early fifth century
Ivory, 29.4 × 12 × 0.6 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10042
PROVENANCE: first recorded in 1804 in the collection of P.G. de Rougoux at Macon, the leaf subsequently passed through the hands of Vicant Denon and Gabor Fejérváry before its final owner, Joseph Mayer (1803–86), the Liverpool goldsmith, jeweller and collector, gave it to Liverpool in 1867
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pulszky 1856, no. 16; London 1923, no. 25; Delbrueck 1929, no. 58; London 1954, no. 12; Volbach 1976, no. 59; Kitzinger 1977, pp. 57–8, pl. 69; New York 1979, no. 84 (S.R.Zwirn); Cameron 1982a, pp. 126–9; Frankfurt-am-Main 1983, no. 222; Gibson 1994, no. 7; London 1994, no. 43 (A.Eastmond); Olovsdotter 2005, pl. 18

This leaf from an ivory diptych (whose other half is now lost) clearly establishes the intimate link between entertainments, spectacle and power in the Late Antique empire. At the top, three unnamed figures in senatorial robes sit in an elaborately decorated box at the arena. The central figure pours a libation to show his responsibility for the event and its ritual importance. He presides over a *venatio*, a stag hunt. This is shown in an overlapping narrative below, which moves from the rampant stag at the bottom to the dead animal lying at the edge of the arena below the senators' feet. The evident virility of the stags emphasises the bravery of the huntsmen, who are shown emerging from doors into the arena (one of which has a depiction of a victorious hunter on it) with no protection apart from their spears.

The emphasis on the hunting, rather than on the three presiding officials, reflects both the expense of these lavish entertainments, and the degree to which prestige was measured by their success and spectacle. The entertainments were free for the citizens to attend, and were judged by the exoticism of the animals that were displayed, and then killed, in the arena. The letters of Q.Aurelius Symmachus concerning his son's quaestorian and praetorian games of 394 and 401 show that diptychs and other gifts were used to advertise families' involvements and consolidate alliances among the élite of the empire: 'It is a solemn and delightful obligation for quaestors *candidati* to present the customary gifts to people of consequence and close friends, in which number you are naturally included. So I offer you an ivory diptych and a small silver bowl weighing two pounds in my son's name, and I beg you to accept this token of respect with pleasure' (*Ep.*7.76, cited in Cameron 1992, p.180).

The date and origin of the ivory is established by its close stylistic and iconographic link to other ivories, such as the Lampadii ivory in Brescia, which has a similar form but shows chariot-racing (Volbach 1976, no.54).

ANTONY EASTMOND

15

Leaf of the consular diptych of Basilius

Rome (?), 541
Ivory, 34.5 × 13 cm
Inscription on the architrave: ANIC(IVS) FAVST(VS) ALBIN(VS) BASILIVS V(IR) C(LARISSIMVS)

Soprintendenza speciale per il Polo Muscale Fiorentino, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no.A8
PROVENANCE: offered to the Uffizi Gallery, Florence, by canonicus Apollonio Bastelli
SELECTED REFERENCES: Delbrueck 1929, no.6, p.100, pl.6; Bovini and Ottolenghi 1956, no. 30, fig. 36; Volbach 1976, no. 5, p. 31, pl. 5; New York 1979, no. 47, pp. 47–8 (J.C.Anderson); Cameron and Schauer 1982; Olovsdotter 2005, no.8, pp.34–8, 107–14, pl.8

This ivory is the front leaf of a diptych whose rear leaf is kept at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan (New York 1979, no.46, pp.47–8 [J.C.Anderson]; Olovsdotter 2005, pp.34, 36, 110–14). Believed for a long time to belong to Basilius, consul of 480, the diptych has been recently assigned to Basilius, a member of a renowned Roman aristocratic family, who assumed the eastern consulship in 541, a few months after the re-establishment of the rule of the Eastern Empire in Italy (Cameron and Schauer 1982). Carved in shallow relief, the standing consul holds a sceptre, probably recarved later at its top, and the mappa. The personification of Rome embraces him by the shoulder and holds the consular fasces. The lower register comprises a scene of four chariots racing around the *spina* of the Circus Maximus and a man holding a codicil and pointing out the upper scene to a youth. The ground is bordered by a Lesbian moulding; an architrave supported by two columns runs along the top.

The diptychs of Felix and Boethius (Volbach 1976, nos 2 and 6, dated to 428 and 487, respectively) may have been the models for this work. The embrace of Rome, an act of distinction and friendship, indicates the consul's close relationship with the ruling class of the old capital. The chariot race corresponds to the same scene in the Lampadii ivory, *c.*400 (Rome 2000A, no 33, pp.445–7; Mariotti 2007, p.255). The pair of the *togatus* and the youth has parallels with the men acclaiming the consul in the Halberstadt diptych or Rufius Probianus in his own diptych, both dated to the early fifth century (Volbach 1976, nos 35 and 62). The panel should be assigned to the sixth century: the rendering of the fasces is similar to the Philoxenus diptych of 525 (Volbach 1976, no.28) and the sharp, flat and

schematic rendering of the figures postdates the above-mentioned fifth-century ivories.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

16

Diptych with Asklepios and Hygieia

Rome, *c.*400–20
Ivory, each leaf 31.4 × 13.9 × 0.6 cm

National Museums Liverpool, World Liverpool Museum, M.10044
PROVENANCE: this diptych has been recorded from *c.*1500, when it was sketched in the Gaddi Collection in Florence (Gibson 1994, pl.VIb). A marquetry box was created for it in the mid-eighteenth century, at about the time the Gaddi Collection was dispersed. Around 1800 F. Caronni sold it to Count Mihály Wiczay of Hédervár (Hungary); then to Gabor Fejérváry in 1834, inherited by K. Pulszky, who sold it in 1857; in 1867 Joseph Mayer left it to the city of Liverpool
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pulszky 1856, nos 25–6; Delbrueck 1929, no.55, pp.217–18; Volbach 1976, no.57; New York 1979, no.133 (W.A.P. Childs); Frankfurt-am-Main 1983, no.167; Kiilerich 1993, pp.149–50, 208, fig.83; Gibson 1994, nos 5–6, with full earlier bibliography; Connor 1998, pp.15, 44, pls VII and VIII

Asklepios and his daughter Hygieia were two of the great healing figures of Classical Antiquity. According to legend they were granted immortality by Zeus because of their medical skills. The main centre of their cult was Epidauros in the Peloponnese, but it spread across the Greco-Roman world, and included a major temple on the island in the Tiber at Rome from 291 BC.

Asklepios is shown leaning on his main attribute, a staff entwined with a single snake, with a bucranion (ox's skull) below. He is accompanied by his son Telesphoros (a symbol of recovery: his name means 'bringing fulfilment'). Hygieia leans on a tripod (symbol of Apollo), around which another snake is entwined; she offers this one an egg. At her side stands Eros, and other symbols of fecundity and healing appear on the capitals that frame the figures. The blank tabulae at the top of the plaques (and the front of the plinths at the bottom) once held inscriptions which presumably indicated the commissioners of the diptych (fragments of letters are visible in Connor 1998, pl.VIII), but this would have been supplemented by whatever was written on the wax on the recessed interior of the diptych. The subject-matter and style of the diptych are overtly classicising, and belong to the brief, self-consciously archaising revival of pagan forms and images that took place in Rome around the year 400 (compare Volbach 1976, no.55).

The plaques seem to represent images of antique statues (compare Gibson 1994, pl.VIa). This is emphasised by the monumentality of the figures and by the projection of the edges of Asklepios' plinth and the base of his staff over the floral border, the subtle hint of perspective, and the layered depths of carving (receding back to the floral swag above the head of Asklepios). The presentation of the gods as statues may have been an attempt to reassert the power of the cult images, in opposition to Christian attempts to destroy such 'idols' or consign them to galleries. The diptychs may have been issued as part of an appeal for the maintenance of the cult statues after the withdrawal of public funding from temples in 394 (Zosimus 1982, IV.59).

ANTONY EASTMOND

17

Plaque with Apollo and Daphne

Perhaps from Egypt, fifth or sixth century
Ivory, 12.2 × 8.8 cm

Soprintendenza per i Beni Architettonici e Paesaggistici di Ravenna, Museo Nazionale di Ravenna, inv.no.1001
SELECTED REFERENCE: Volbach 1976, no.80, p.62

This panel is an example of Late Antique Hellenism within the Christian empire (see Bowersock 1990). It shows Apollo holding a lyre and accompanied by a swan with Eros flying above him, as he approaches Daphne, who is already turning into a bay tree. The imagery celebrates mythological subject-matter, including an ancient deity, in a strikingly Hellenising manner that insists on full-frontal nudity for both figures. None of this appears to have been problematic for a Christian audience, so long perhaps as such items were kept in the domestic sphere (and not used in church). It may be that the only really offensive pagan-related imagery would have been scenes of sacrifice, which are hardly attested at all after the fourth century. Our visual evidence for this kind of iconography in Late Antiquity – which includes textiles, small-scale marble sculpture, silverware and mosaics as well as ivories – extends at least into Middle Byzantium, but relatively little 'secular' work survives from the later period.

JAŚ ELSNER

18

Plaque with Nereid with fruit-filled basket

Egypt, possibly Alexandria, fifth century
Animal bone, 4.8 × 14 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.18747. Gift of Loukas Benakis
SELECTED REFERENCES: Marangou 1976, pp.42, 116, no.165, pl.42a; Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, p.297, no.317, pl.84

The right-hand side of this plaque is broken. It bears a hole for nailing it to a wooden casket, similar to one in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pl.14). Caskets were used for the safekeeping of jewellery, documents and other objects, and were buried with their owner in the grave. The principal centre of their production was Egypt, and particularly Alexandria (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp.57–8), where the largest number of such plaques has been found.

The decorative subject in low relief, which combines incision and carving (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp.156–65), represents a recumbent female nude with uplifted torso, leaning on her bent right arm and turning her head backwards. She stretches out her left hand, which holds in check the edge of the *peplos*, towards a basket of fruits in front of her slightly flexed legs.

The figure is a Nereid, a subject from the iconographic cycle of the 'marine *thiasos*', which, together with the 'Dionysian cycle', decorates the group of bone plaques in bas-relief. The subject is linked with the birth of Aphrodite and the daughters of Nereus, the Nereids, who form her retinue. This type of Nereid, which is very widely disseminated in Late Antiquity, is encountered both in monumental art, as on sarcophagi or mosaic pavements, and in the minor arts (Loverdou-Tsigarida 2000, pp.85, 179–80). The spread of the Nereid motif in this period, notwithstanding the prevailing of the Christian religion, is attributed to its propitious symbolism, which is associated with the journey to the Isles of the Blessed, where the Nereids accompanied the mortals and which Christians had linked with Paradise.

KATIA LOVERDOU-TSIGARIDA

19

The Antioch Chalice

Byzantine, from Syria, possibly Kaper Koraon or Antioch, first half of the sixth century

Silver cup set in footed silver-gilt shell, height 19.7 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection, 1950 (50.4)
PROVENANCE: originally said to have been found at Antioch in 1910; also argued to have been found *c.*1908 in northern Syria and connected to the Church of St Sergios in the village of Kaper Koraon; restored by Léon André, Paris, 1913; owned by the dealers Kouchakji Frères until sold to The Cloisters in 1950
SELECTED REFERENCES: Eisen 1916; Morey 1925; Jerphanion 1926; Wilpert 1926; Paris 1931, no.335, p.115; Peirce and Tyler 1932; Eisen 1933; Rorimer 1954; London 1977, no.147, p.86; New York 1979, no.542, pp.606–7 (M.E. Frazer); Baltimore 1986, no.40, pp.183–7 (M.Mundell Mango); Boyd 1988; Mundell Mango 1988; Worcester 2001, no.104, pp.214–15 (H.Evans); Trier 2007, pp.380–5 and no.I.II.1. (A.Kaufmann-Heinimann and M. Martin)

Formed of a simple silver cup encased within an elaborate inhabited grapevine rinceaux patterned shell, the so-called Antioch Chalice has been an enigmatic work since its discovery at the beginning of the twentieth century (Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001, no.104, pp.214–15). Originally, the cup was argued to be the Holy Grail used by Christ at the Last Supper with its shell dated to the second half of the first century. The twelve seated figures inhabiting the shell's grape-laden vine were identified as being two of the earliest portraits of Christ and ten of the Apostles (Eisen 1916, pp.426–37). The vessel was shown as the Holy Grail at the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1933, although by the 1920s scholars had begun questioning its date (Morey 1925, pp.73–80; Jerphanion 1926; Wilpert 1926, pp.110–41; Peirce and Tyler 1932, pp.69–71). The vessel was exhibited in the first major exhibition on Byzantine art in Paris in 1931 as a fifth-century work and acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a work of that date in 1950.

The vessel is now considered to be a standing lamp of the early sixth century, an identification supported by stylistic analysis of the images and the resemblance of the shape of the vessel to that of standing lamps of the early sixth-century Sion treasure (New York 1979, no.542, pp.606–7 [M.E. Frazer]; Boyd 1988, pp.191–202). Standing lamps appear on the lintel over the altar in the Riha Paten (cat.20). Originally connected with Antioch, the vessel has also been identified with the Church of St Sergios near Kaper Koraon in Syria (Baltimore 1986, no.40, pp.183–7; Mundell Mango 1988, pp.163–77; London 1977, no.147, p.86). The recently discovered, large Early Christian ewer in Trier decorated with an unusual number of men in tunics with clear Christological connections outside of established iconographic concepts emphasises the difficulty in identifying the imagery of unique Early Byzantine objects (Trier 2007, pp.382–5 with illustrations and no.I.II.1 [A.Kaufmann-Heinimann and M.Martin]).

HELEN C. EVANS

20

Paten with the Communion of the Apostles

Constantinople or Syria, 565–78
Silver repoussé with gilding and inscription in niello, diameter 35 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC: Byzantine Collection, BZ.1924.5
PROVENANCE: Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, acquired 1924
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ross 1962, no.10; New York 1979, no.547, colour plate XVI; Schrader 1979; Baltimore 1986, no.35; Los Angeles 2006, no.37

Behind a cloth-covered altar, the cross-nimbed figure of Christ, shown twice, administers the bread on the right and the wine on the left to two groups of Apostles. They stand on either side of the table bearing a chalice, a paten and two wine skins. In the exergue below are more liturgical vessels. The architectural setting controls and unifies the vivid narrative created by the animated Apostles. The two spiral columns that support an architrave with a shell niche mark the 'holy space' – the sanctuary reserved for the two figures of Christ. This symmetrical composition representing the Communion of the Apostles is inscribed into the centre of the paten; the inscription around the rim reads: 'For the peace of the soul of Sergia, daughter of Ioannes, and of Theodosius, and for the salvation of Megalos and Nonnous and of their children.' The control stamps with imperial portraits and monograms on the reverse of the paten are those of Justin II (565–78).

Patens in different sizes were used to display and carry Eucharistic bread. Only a few preserved plates represent the Communion Rite itself. A similar depiction of the Communion of the twelve Apostles is represented on a paten in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

Silver vessels were gifted to fulfil a vow, or, as in the case of this paten, to obtain salvation and commemorate the memory of family members.

GUDRUN BÜHL

21

Ivory with Archangel

Constantinople, *c.*525–550
Ivory, 42.8 × 14.3 × 0.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E OA 9999
PROVENANCE: before 1856, when already in the British Museum; unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.295; Dalton 1909, no.11; Delvoye 1971, p.209; Volbach 1976, no.109; Wright 1977; New York 1979, no.481 (S.A.Boyd); Cutler 1984B; London 1994, no.64 (A.Eastmond); Cormack 2000A, pp.45–8, fig.23

This exquisite ivory leaf of an archangel demonstrates the existence of a classicising, naturalistic style in sixth-century Byzantine art. It is the largest single piece of ivory to survive from Byzantium, and one of the most magnificently carved. The archangel, with a tall sceptre or staff in his left hand, holds out an orb surmounted by a cross in his right. He appears to loom forward in front of the fluted columns on either side, even though he stands on steps that recede behind them: it is a fine visual balance between the materiality of the image and the incorporeal nature of the angel. The image's success lies in the overall grace of the pose and the sensitive drapery folds of the angel, as well as in its many fine details: the patterned cuffs, bows on the sandals and the careful delineation of feathers. These are matched by the intricate carving of the arch over his head and the fluttering ribbons extending from the wreath around the cross.

The archangel would have offered the orb to a second figure, presumably an emperor given its imperial connotations, on the now lost left leaf of this diptych. Close comparisons in the carving technique of this ivory and of those produced for Justinian when he was appointed consul in 521 (Cutler 1984B), and Justinian's known interest in the cult of the Archangel Michael (Cormack 2000A, p.45), suggest that this was produced for that emperor, possibly on his accession to the throne.

The inscription, a line of iambic trimester, at the top reads: ΔΕΧΟΥ ΠΑΡΟΝΤΑ / ΚΑΙ ΜΑΘΩΝ ΤΗΝ ΑΙΤΙΑΝ, but its translation is contested: 'Receive this suppliant, despite his sinfulness' (Cormack 2000A, p.47; implying imperial humility); 'Accept present circumstances, even understanding their essence' (Wright 1977, pp.7–9, a reference to Justinian's accession in 527); or 'Accept this gift, and having learned the cause' (Cust 1902, p.55). All hypothesise an image of the emperor, or a second line of text, on the missing leaf to complete the sense of the message.

On the reverse is a fragment of a seventh-century Syrian liturgical text in Greek, which suggests that it was still in the eastern part of the empire at that time.

ANTONY EASTMOND

22

Ivory with Adoration of the Magi

Eastern Mediterranean, first half of the sixth century
Ivory, 21.5 × 12.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1904,0702.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Delvoye 1971, p.213; Volbach 1976, no.131; New York 1979, no.476 (S.A. Boyd); Aylesbury 1995, no.1; Athens 2000, no.3 (A.Eastmond)

This ivory plaque is dominated by its imposing central figure of the Virgin. Mary, cradling the Christ Child on her lap, is much the largest figure; she sits on a backless throne staring out at the viewer, as does her son, who also raises his hand in a gesture of blessing. To either side, the three Magi (supplemented by an angel to maintain the symmetry of the image) enter in their Phrygian robes, offering their gifts in covered hands, but there is little sense of narrative. Although they are now heavily worn, the almost circular eyes of the Virgin and of Christ unblinkingly confront the viewer. They suggest a direct engagement between worshipper and the divine, although the rigid, hieratic composition presents them as figures for veneration rather than intercession. This fits the growing cult of Mary, who, after the third ecumenical council at Ephesus in 431, was acknowledged as the Mother of God.

This symbolic image is paired with a narrative scene below, showing the miracle of Salome: the midwife whose hand withered when she denied the Virgin birth, only to have it restored by holding it up to the Christ Child (the story is recorded in the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, chapters 19–20, and appears on a number of other sixth-century ivories: Volbach 1976, nos 127, 140, 174, 199).

The plaque marks a shift in the use of ivory from a material for luxury functional objects (primarily diptychs, pyxides, boxes, book covers) to one suitable for more contemplative worship. It parallels the rise in painted icons for veneration in the sixth century, although the scale of the ivory suggests that it was designed for more individual, personal use. However, the edges of the ivory were subsequently all cut down to allow the plaque to be reused as the centre of a five-part panel (comparable to a dispersed group with similar iconography: New York 1979, nos 457–61).

ANTONY EASTMOND

23

Ivory with the Annunciation

Eastern Mediterranean, late seventh or early eighth century
Ivory, 19.7 × 9.4 cm

Civiche Raccolte d'Arte Applicata, Castello Sforzesco, Milan, inv.no.14
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann 1972C, with previous bibliography; Venice 1974, no.16 (I. Furlan); Zastrow 1976; Zastrow 1978, pp.22–3

This ivory is not an independent panel but must have functioned, together with a number of other pieces, as revetments on church furnishings. It belongs to a group of about fourteen similarly carved panels which has been dated variably from

the sixth to the eleventh century (see Weitzmann 1972c). A date in the late seventh to early eighth century seems most likely. The Annunciation is among the plaques displaying the highest quality workmanship and its carving style focuses on elegance and fine surface details.

In front of an elaborate and complex architectural setting the Archangel Gabriel, identified by a vertical inscription in raised Greek letters, +ΓΑΒΡΙΗΛ, approaches the standing Virgin. Her seat with a curved high back is barely visible between the columns. Gabriel holds a long sceptre in his left hand and addresses the Virgin with his right. The elaborate drapery of his garment and the awkwardly turned left foot conveys his sudden arrival. Mary is also identified by inscription, Η ΑΓΙΑ ΜΑΡΙΑ (Holy Maria or Saint Maria), a form of address that ceases to exist after the ninth century. It is above her head with letters beautifully intertwined to create a decorative openwork pattern. In contrast to Gabriel, the Virgin is depicted in a self-absorbed and contained pose. The hand placed at the side of her head with its long finger along her cheek gives her a pensive and wondering expression. She is tightly draped in a mannered pose.

The attention paid to detail is unusual. The decorative architectural features behind the figures, the angled pediment, the lavish curls of the archangel, the fancy folds and tassels of her mantle all contribute to the preciousness of the piece.

IOLI KALAVREZOU

24

Diptych leaf with a Byzantine empress

Sixth century
Ivory, traces of gilding and paint, 26.5 × 12.7 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Antikensammlung, X39
SELECTED REFERENCES: Delbrueck 1929, no.52; Volbach 1976, no.52; New York 1979, pp.31–2; James 2001; Angelova 2004, pp.1–15

This panel is part of an imperial diptych and depicts an empress in her majesty. She is seated on a jewelled and cushioned throne with a curved back, holding a *globus cruciger* in her left hand while her right hand is extended sideways, palm outwards. She wears elaborate jewelled robes and a diadem with pendilia. On her robes, the outline of a *tablion* bearing another imperial figure can be distinguished. She is located below a cupola crowned by eagles and supported by pillars, around which curtains are draped.

There is a very similar plaque in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, where the empress stands in the niche. In both cases, she is most commonly identified as Ariadne (before 457–515), daughter of Emperor Leo I and wife of the emperors Zeno and Anastasios, on the basis of perceived similarities with dated consular diptychs of Clementinus, Anastasios and Areobindus. As a result, a whole series of sculpted anonymous imperial female heads is also identified as Ariadne. However, images from this period are difficult to identify as physical likeness was not a requisite of portraiture; the images of Ariadne on consular diptychs also resemble those on diptychs of the Empress Theodora, wife of Justinian. The image raises questions about the role and depiction of the Early Byzantine empresses. Her dress, placing and attributes suggest – at least visually – that empresses held considerable power in their own right.

LIZ JAMES

25

Ivory diptych

Constantinople, mid-sixth century
Ivory, each panel 29 × 13 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv.564 and 565
PROVENANCE: from the Königliche Kunstkammer, Berlin
SELECTED REFERENCES: Volbach 1976, no.137, p.91; Paderborn 1999, no.X26; Bühl 2002; Munich 2004, no.202, p.162 (G.Bühl)

Both halves of this ecclesiastical diptych have been cropped at the bottom: a remnant of an inscription – a superscript 'C' – recalls the ivory throne of Archbishop Maximian in Ravenna. The style of the images – an aged Christ on the left, flanked by the Apostles, Peter and Paul, and, on the right, the Virgin holding the Christ Child in her lap and flanked by archangels – is likewise very closely related to that of the Ravenna throne, and both objects most probably date from the same time, the mid-sixth century.

The ivory panels belong to the same tradition as the consular diptychs of the fifth and sixth centuries. The latter presentation tablets, given by the annually appointed consuls in both halves of the empire to friends and senators, generally showed the new consul enthroned in a frontal pose on the *sella curulis* (official chair or stool) with the insignia of his office and often flanked by officials. The diptych with Christ and Mary uses the same visual symbols – an archivolt above columns as a mark of distinction, a curtain in the background, a throne and members of 'court' in attendance – while both contrasting and linking the heavenly ruler in his perfect and mature divinity with the mother of God, Mary, who presents the incarnated son of God as the divine *logos*.

The special appeal of the carving lies in its balance between severe, hard-edged lines and vibrant softness in certain details of the faces and drapery. The relief conveys a remarkable illusion of depth and three-dimensionality, despite a maximum actual depth of 0.3 cm.

The reverse bears the remains of an ink inscription that has been dated to the sixth century and shows saints' names in two columns.

GUDRUN BÜHL

26

Ampulla with images of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 6.4 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampoule 10
SELECTED REFERENCES: Grabar 1958; Monza no.10, pp.26–7; Conti 1985, no.10, pp.24–5

The sixteen pewter ampullae from the Holy Land now in Monza were filled with holy oil and brought as relics to the West. They belong to a class of Early Christian items called *eulogiae* or 'blessings'. A Jerusalem pilgrim of about 570 AD from Piacenza describes how the oil in such flasks bubbles over as it touches the wood of the True Cross (Wilkinson 2002, p.139). Although mass-produced and of cheap material, these ampullae were evidently highly prized by the time they arrived in Western Europe: the Monza group was given to the cathedral by the Lombard queen Theodolinda in about 600, while a similar collection now in Bobbio were buried with the body of St Columban. The rich iconography on the ampullae both illustrates Christ's life and evokes directly the specific holy places where pilgrims acquired these *eulogiae*. This example, which shows the Crucifixion and Resurrection (both venerated in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) as well as the Ascension, surely comes from Jerusalem where all these sites were located. The obverse has the Crucifixion with Christ as a bust above the Cross between the sun and moon and the two thieves, as well as Mary and John the Evangelist and two kneeling worshippers beneath. Below this, in a scene inscribed 'the Resurrection of the Lord', are two Marys before the tomb of Christ, beside which sits an angel. The inscription round the circumference reads 'Oil of the wood of life from the holy places of Christ'. On the obverse is a representation of the Ascension.

JAS' ELSNER

27

Ampulla with images of the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Palestine, sixth century AD
Pewter (lead and tin alloy), diameter 7 cm

Museo e Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, ampoule 1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Grabar 1958, Monza no.1, pp.16–17; Conti 1985, no.1, pp.19–20; Elsner 1997

This ampulla shows the Adoration of the Magi (inscribed 'Magi' to the left) and the Shepherds on the obverse, with angels above the Enthroned Virgin and sheep and goats beneath the inscription that forms the ground, which reads in Greek 'Emmanuel, God is with us'. The inscription around the circumference says 'Oil of the wood of life from the holy places of Christ'. The reverse, without an inscription, shows the Ascension with the Virgin between the twelve Apostles below and four angels carrying Christ in a mandorla above. There is a visual play of the seated Virgin carrying Christ on the obverse against the standing Virgin Orans with Christ enthroned above her in the Ascension. The iconography of the Ascension may be compared with that of cat.26, but here there is no dove flying down between Christ and Mary, while Christ has long rather than short and curly hair. As collections, the Monza and Bobbio ampullae were carefully selected (perhaps from one larger group) to offer the widest range of iconographies and hence references to scriptural events and holy places in Palestine. Effectively they became a contemplative means to evoke the totality of the Holy Land in north Italy through relics which had actually come from there.

JAS' ELSNER

28

Gold pendant with the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension

Eastern Mediterranean, around AD 600
Gold, diameter (including suspension loop) 6.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1983.7-4.1
SELECTED REFERENCE: Entwistle 2005, pp.267–73, fig.3

This gold *enkolpion* is constructed of two thin sheets of embossed gold set back to back over a sulphur core. The front is decorated with the Adoration of the Magi, with the three Magi approaching from the left and the Virgin seated on the right, with the infant Christ on her lap. Above are a flying angel and the star of Bethlehem. Below is a Greek inscription: ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΟΗΘΙ ΤΗ ΦΟΡΟΥCΑ ΑΜΗΝ (Lord protect the wearer. Amen). On the reverse is the Ascension, with Christ in a mandorla supported by four angels above the Virgin, who is flanked by the eleven disciples and St Paul. Below them is a further Greek inscription: ΕΙΡΗΝΗΝ ΤΗΝ ΕΜΗΝ ΑΦΙΟΜΕ ΥΜΙΝ (Our peace we leave with you; John XIV, 27).

This pendant can be grouped with six others of the sixth or early seventh century, all decorated with scenes from the life of Christ (Entwistle 2005, pp.269–70). The closest example to the above pendant is now unfortunately lost, but is known from a drawing in the Royal Collection at Windsor (Osborne and Claridge 1998, no.284). Although its obverse side is different – it depicts the Flight into Egypt – the reverse has a very similar depiction of the Ascension, differing only in that four angels support Christ's mandorla and the absence of an inscription. The iconography of the Ascension in particular relates the medallion to both reliquaries and ampullae perhaps produced in the Holy Land for pilgrims around 600. As with rings and marriage-belts, enkolpia were also exchanged as gifts at the marriage ceremony, where they seem to have functioned as a confirmation of contract.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

29

Copy from a cast of a now lost gold medallion of Justinian I (527–65)

Mint of Constantinople, 534 (?)–538
Electrotype, diameter 8.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, BMC p.25
SELECTED REFERENCES: Babelon 1896; Wroth 1908, p.25; Barker 1966, pp.266–87

The obverse of this medallion shows a bust of Justinian I, three-quarter facing, nimbate, wearing cuirass, *paludamentum*, plumed helmet and diadem. He holds a spear and shield. The inscription reads: DNIVSTINII ANVSPPAVC. On the reverse Justinian I can be seen on horseback, in the same attire as above, preceded by Victory, who carries a palm and trophy. The inscription reads: SALVSETCL ORIA ROMANO RVM (Welfare and Glory of the Romans); in exergue, CONOB.

This medallion, struck to celebrate the conquest of the Vandal kingdom, weighed 164.05 g and equalled 36 gold *solidi*. Found in 1751 in the area of Caesarea in Cappadocia, it was later acquired by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, from where it was stolen and melted down in 1831. The issue of gold multiples of *solidi* such as this medallion was intended for distribution, mainly to foreign rulers as diplomatic gifts.

EURYDICE S. GEORGANTELI

30, 31, 32

Silver plates with scenes from the life of David

Constantinople, 613–629/30
Silver, diameter 14 cm, 26.8 cm, 14 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. nos J. 452–54
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1911, p.105, fig.62; New York 1979, p.477; Leader-Newby 2004, pp.181–208

These three silver plates belong to the so-called 'second treasure of Lambousa', which was discovered in two batches on 10 and 12 February 1902. According to oral information, the first treasure consisted of golden objects and was discovered in an earthen pot hidden under a floor. The second treasure consisted of nine silver plates and was found bricked up in a niche of a wall that was presumably part of the remains of the Byzantine city of Lambousa, near the modern town of Kyrenia. At that time, the police managed to confiscate part of the treasure, consisting of the three plates now in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia. The other six are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

The nine plates came in different sizes: a large one showing David and Goliath (diameter 49.4 cm), three of around 28 cm, one of around 27 cm and four of around 14 cm. The David plates show the early life of David as related in I Samuel (in the Septuagint, I Kings, XVI, 12 to XVIII, 27), from David's anointing by Samuel to his fight with Goliath and marriage to Saul's daughter.

In the plate that shows David summoned to Samuel (cat.30), heaven is represented above with sun, moon and stars. A messenger arrives to summon David, son of Jesse, to meet Samuel. David is playing his lyre and minding sheep. Both figures have haloes, which lend an air of the sacred to the event. The scene is very rarely illustrated in Early Byzantine art. In the plate that shows David slaying a bear (cat.32), David tells Saul that he will be able to kill Goliath, just as he has killed lions and bears as a shepherd. Both deeds are represented on the David plates, this one showing him mastering the bear. David grabs the fur between the animal's ears, thrusts his knee into its back and prepares to bludgeon it with a tapered, horn-shaped weapon. In the plate depicting the Marriage of David and Michal (cat.31), David is rewarded for killing Goliath with a dowry (in bags and the basket below) and with marriage to Saul's second daughter; the couple 'join their right hands' according to Byzantine wedding ceremonial. Between them and also haloed is Saul on a footstool and in imperial dress. Two flute players are on each side and the marriage takes place beneath a colonnaded façade.

The group of nine silver plates are a striking example of the continuation – or revival – of Classical naturalistic traditions. But the subject-matter is of course openly Christian and not pagan like the models for this style. Each plate has a low ring base and is executed in low relief. Before the craftsman got to work, each plate was hallmarked in Constantinople with four or five control stamps, which indicate that they were produced as a set during the reign of Herakleios (610–41).

The mystery surrounding these plates is how they came to Cyprus, where it is assumed that they were hidden for safekeeping during some historical crisis (Arab raids?). Their quality and subject-matter have led to the interpretation that the story of David in some way symbolises the reign of Herakleios and that this emperor sent them as a present to an imperial official on the island for use and display in his home. Rather than trying to link each plate with some episode in the life of the emperor, Leader-Newby (2004) instead sees the David story as an allegory of the growth to maturity of the ideal monarch David (the best model for emperors to follow, according to Byzantine rhetoric and writings). In other words, the cycle of plates belongs to the same tradition as Homer's *Odyssey*, in which is narrated the growing to manhood of Telemachus, son of Odysseus. A Byzantine education ensured that élite consumers of high art such as these plates knew their Homer as well as their Bible.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

33

Silver plate with goatherd, two goats and a dog

Constantinople, *c.*530 (?)
Chased and incised silver, diameter 23.8 cm; diameter of footring 9 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no. ю 277
PROVENANCE: found in the village of Klimovo, Solikamsk Uezd, region of Perm, 1907, with two Byzantine plates from the seventh century and four Sasanid vessels
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bank 1985, pp. 279–80, pls 55–56; Zaleskaya 1988, St Petersburg and London 2000, pp. 48–9 (V. Zaleskaya); Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 310–12 (V. Zaleskaya); Leader-Newby 2004, p. 176, fig. 4.3; Zaleskaya 2006a, pp. 56–8, note 25; Zaleskaya 2006b

This plate shows a pastoral scene, with the goatherd deep in contemplation of nature within a fertile landscape. Such scenes are found in Antiquity in the wall paintings of Pompeii and other Campanian sites, such as Paris among the flocks on Mount Ida (now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples). The theme is found in Greek and Roman poetry and continues into Christian literature, such as these verses in a homily of the fourth-century Father Gregory of Nazianzos:

> Tormented by profound grief, yesterday I sat sadly
> Alone in a shady grove, withdrawn from all human company.
> It pleases me to heal my weariness of spirit in this way,
> Making quiet conversation with my weeping heart.

This sort of literary continuity from Antiquity into Byzantium is reminiscent of the use in art of the image of the Good Shepherd to evoke Christ.

On the base there are five control stamps from the time of Justinian I (527–65). One of these includes a monogram which can be read as ΠΕΤΡΟΥ. This man was probably the state official in Constantinople who had a supervisory role over the use of silver, the so-called *comes sacrarum largitionum*. These officials used the five stamps to authenticate the quality of the silver and perhaps to signify that the necessary fees had been paid by the producer. They held office for only a short period, some two or three years. The form of the monogram suits a date early in the reign of Justinian and it may belong to 530–32.

VERA ZALESSKAYA

34

Chalice with four Apostles and the Cross

Syria, *c.*550–75
Chased silver with traces of partial gilding, height 16.8 cm; diameter of cup 14 cm; diameter of foot 9.5 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv. 57.656
PROVENANCE: discovered in Syria, 1908–10; purchased by Tawfic Abucasem, Hama and Port Said, *c.*1913; purchased by Joseph Brummer, Paris, *c.*1928; purchased by Henry Walters, Baltimore, 1929; bequeathed to the Walters Art Gallery (now Walters Art Museum), 1931
SELECTED REFERENCES: Diehl 1926, p. 107, pls xx–xxi; New York 1979, no. 532, pp. 599–600 (H. Buschhausen); Baltimore 1986, no. 3, pp. 47, 52 and 74–7 (C.E. Snow, T. Drayman Weisser and M. Mundell Mango, with bibliography); Effenberger 1991, pp. 256–7 and 268; RBK, vol. 5, col. 158 (E. Dinkler and E. Dinkler-von Schubert); Elbern 1998, pp. 510–11

Hidden during the last Byzantine war with Persia (Effenberger 1991, p. 264), this chalice was unearthed together with 24 other silver objects (Baltimore 1986, p. 25) and perhaps comes from an even larger hoard. Its surface is noticeably worn by use. All associated pieces seem made for a church; most carry Greek dedicatory inscriptions. The one here reads: 'Prayer of Pelagios, [son of] Basianos. Sacred vessel of Saint Sergios in the village of Kaper Koraon.' Inexpertly written with a pointed instrument, this text must have been added after manufacture. Kaper Koraon is probably present-day Kurin in Syria, so the chalice may have been produced in the nearby city of Antioch. Unlike many Early Byzantine precious vessels, the piece does not carry government-control stamps that guarantee the purity of its metal. Still, the silver invested in it could have bought a camel at the time (Mundell Mango 1992, p. 133). The donor Pelagios was probably related to several persons named on other objects from the hoard. His hypothetical genealogy suggests he lived shortly after 550 (Effenberger 1991, p. 277).

This is one of the few pieces from Kaper Koraon to include figural decoration. Typically of Early Byzantine religious art (Maguire 1996, pp. 100–6), the saints depicted are unnamed. Three hold books that generally identify them as Apostles, while the fourth appears to be St Peter (LCI, vol. 8, cols 161–2). Contemporary chalices (Elbern 2004) and censers (Piguet-Panayotova 1998b) have Christ's image centrally placed on one side and the Virgin's on the other. Here, the Saviour is symbolically represented by two crosses (see RBK, vol. 5, cols 30–1). 'Instead of the person of our Lord, [the holy Church] places the Cross and the Gospel on the altar', explains a seventh-century Syriac text (Brock 2003, § 46).

GEORGI R. PARPULOV

35

The Emesus Vase

Constantinople or Syria (?), end of the sixth century
Silver, 45 × 27 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Department of Greek, Etruscan and Roman Antiquities, Bj 1893
PROVENANCE: Homs (formerly Emesa), Syria. Gift of J. A. Durighello, 1892
SELECTED REFERENCES: Héron de Villefosse 1892; Baltimore 1986, no. 84, pp. 255–6; Metzger 1986; Paris 1992, no. 62, p. 115; Rome 2000c, no. 74, p. 218, pl. p. 152

The Emesus Vase is made from a sheet of hammered silver and is unusual because of its size: it is the largest-known example of a precious metal container from pre-iconoclastic Byzantium. Its decoration uses the technique known as repoussé; the details, however, have been engraved or incised on the exterior face of the metal. The base of the neck and the foot are accentuated by a strapwork design, which is repeated above and below the band of decoration that encircles the central bulge of the vase.

Eight half-length figures, lightly embossed in the same sheet of silver, occupy eight medallions placed at regular intervals, and are separated by a Classical motif consisting of a horn emerging from a clump of acanthus and framed by leaves which form volutes. Christ, bearded and with long hair, holds the Gospels and has his hand raised in blessing. The Apostles Peter and Paul stand beside him, turned three-quarter face towards him. The Virgin Mary, veiled, is placed symmetrically opposite, flanked by two archangels. The two last figures have been identified as John the Baptist, the older man, and John the Evangelist, holding the Gospels. Although this design of busts placed in medallions to form a frieze is found quite frequently on liturgical objects of this period, such as chalices, reliquaries and censers, the stylistic treatment of the busts on the Emesus Vase is of remarkable quality and displays an undeniable mastery of technique. Particularly noteworthy is the individualisation of each figure and the subtle handling of facial expressions.

The function and origins of this exceptional piece remain an enigma, however. The smallness of the pouring spout, which is completely out of proportion with the size of the vase, the hypothetical presence of a handle, of which nothing but a few traces on the neck remain, and the vase's unusually large dimensions – and thus its weight – make any functional use unlikely. Rather than a liturgical vase intended to contain Eucharistic wine, perhaps the object should be seen as a luxurious gift donated by one of the faithful to a church in the context of the creation of a treasury. Nevertheless, the absence of an inscription that would usually commemorate such a generous gift is surprising, as is the lack of a stamp or hallmark, which makes manufacture in an imperial workshop unlikely.

CÉCILE GIROIRE

36

Censer

Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 10.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.3
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no. 399; Dodd 1961, no. 35; Athens 1964, no. 491; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 61; London 1977, no. 176; New York 1979, no. 562

This hexagonal censer, once suspended by three chains now lost, rests on a foot-ring within which are five imperial control stamps of the Emperor Phokas (602–10). The censer is decorated on its six sides with bust portraits of Christ, flanked by those of St Peter and St Paul, and of the Virgin, flanked by those of St John the Evangelist and St James. On other objects, the Virgin is often flanked by archangels. A series of busts in medallions or single figures standing under arcades are more common as decoration on Late Antique religious silver than narrative compositions.

Censers were used to perfume both cult and secular settings. While most Byzantine censers (both standing and suspended) are made of bronze, an interesting series in silver survives in both round and polygonal forms. The latter includes two other hexagonal censers, both with control stamps of Maurice (582–602) and decorated with six standing figures (Piguet-Panayotova 1998a, pp. 639–46). The Cyprus example may be the smallest silver censer surviving from the period, standing only 6 cm high. Silver censers are normally decorated with Christian subjects.

This censer belongs to the first Cyprus treasure whose other objects are domestic. Within this overall context, the censer may represent the type of Christianised domestic object discussed in relation to the serving plate (cat. 44) and bowl (cat. 45) found with it, or it may have been used in a household chapel.

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

37

Silver pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels

Eastern Mediterranean (Syria), Early Byzantine period, sixth–seventh century
Silver with gilding, 7 × 9 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of George D. and Margo Behrakis in honour of John J. Herrmann, Jr., Curator of Classical Art 1976–2004, 2005.200
SELECTED REFERENCES: Thomas 2000; Minchev 2003, no. 29, p. 38; Grossmann, Ledig and Kondoleon 2008, p. 52

This small spherical vessel (pyxis) was made by hammering a thin sheet of silver into the desired form and then polishing while spinning on a wheel, a standard technique of Syrian silversmiths. Four standing figures in relief, each accented with gilding, encircle the vessel. Flanking the Virgin and Christ are a pair of archangels dressed in military costumes, in the manner of court guards, and each holding a staff and an orb marked by a cross. Christ, long-haired and bearded, gestures in blessing with his right hand, while in his left he holds the Holy Gospels. The Virgin, who is rarely depicted on Early Byzantine silver, holds a disk-like object with a cross in her hands, similar to crossed disks found in sixth- and seventh-century paintings decorating Christian funerary chapels in Egypt (Thomas 2000, fig. 90). This unusual object might symbolise the incarnation, referring to the virginal birth of Christ and reflecting the growing status of Mary as the Mother of God.

The pyxis belongs in style and technique to a group of silver containers produced in Syria for well-to-do Christians living in this prosperous and stable region during the Early Byzantine period. A lid, now lost, would have covered the vessel, protecting its sacred contents, either incense used in the liturgy or perhaps a small piece of a saintly relic. Such objects served as votives, prayers made in the form of precious gifts to local churches and monasteries, entreating Christ and the Virgin to act as intercessors between the donors and the court of heaven. The excavation of a similar spherical silver reliquary at a site in modern-day Bulgaria (Minchev 2003, cat. 29, p. 38) raises the possibility that portable containers made by Syrian craftsmen carried sacred relics across the Mediterranean.

CHRISTINE KONDOLEON

38.1, 38.2

Medallion with the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Adoration and the Baptism and a braided chain

Constantinople, late sixth century
Gold, diameter of medallion 7.2 cm; diameter of chain 32.5 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC. Byzantine Collection, BZ 1955.10.1-2
PROVENANCE: found near Kyrenia, Cyprus, 1906; Josef Strzygowski, Vienna; Walter Strzygowski, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington DC, 1955
SELECTED REFERENCES: Strzygowski 1915, pp. 96–104, pl. 1; Strzygowski 1917, pp. 44–45; Smith 1918, p. 80; Volbach 1921, p. 17; Strzygowski 1929, p. 207, fig. 197; Strzygowski 1936, p. 28, pl. 6; Megaw 1936, pp. 171–82, fig. 6; Ross 1957, *passim*; Volbach 1958, no. 248, p. 92; Talbot-Rice 1959, p. 302; Klauser 1960, v. 5, col. 287; Beckwith 1961, p. 58, fig. 60; Grierson 1961, pp. 221–4; Buschhausen 1965, p. 168, n. 155; Athens 1964, no. 399, p. 369; Ross 1965, no. 36, pp. 33–5, colour pls XXVIII, XXIX. A; Dumbarton Oaks 1967, no. 181, p. 51; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, pp. 45–9, figs 33–4; London 1977, no. 192, pp. 115; New York 1979, no. 287, pp. 312–13; Kurpp 1986, v. 3, pp. 121–36, fig. 39; Neubauer 1995, pp. 60, 65; Metzger 1998, p. 56

The obverse of this medallion shows the Virgin and Child enthroned between angels, with small representations of the Nativity and the Adoration beneath. Just inside the braided frame, an inscription reads Χ(ΡΙCΤ)Ε Ο Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΜΩΝ / ΒΟΗΘΙCΟΝ ΗΜΙΝ (Christ, our God, help us). The reverse side narrates the Baptism of Christ. John places his hand on Christ's head, as the dove of the Spirit descends and two angels approach with towels. God's hand appears at the top, the iconic counterpart to the inscription, + ΟΥΤΟC ΕCΤΙΝ Ω ΥΕΙΟC ΜΟΥ/ΑΓΑΠΗΤΟC ΕΝ Ω ΕΥΔΟΚΗCΑ (This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased; Matthew III, 17). In the water below, two excited male figures emerge from shells while a third reclines with an urn and waves a reed in amazement. These figures are personifications of the Ior and the Dan (the two sources of the Jordan River; Ross 1965, p. 33) and the Sea, recalling a verse in the Psalms that Christians associated with the Baptism: 'The sea saw it, and fled: Jordan was driven back' (Psalm CXIV, 3). The theme of divine epiphany unites the two sides, God revealing himself to the magi on the obverse, and to John the Baptist on the reverse.

Strzygowski, who once owned this piece, thought it was produced in the region of Jerusalem, because the events occurred at pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land (Strzygowski 1915, p. 96). Considering the method of fabrication – it was struck like a coin rather than cast – and the Constantinopolitan origins of objects from the same archaeological context, Marvin Ross reattributed it to the capital (Ross 1957). Ross went on to relate the style to coins minted by Maurice Tiberios (582–602) and even the choice of the Baptism to the celebration of the baptism of Maurice's son and heir apparent Theodosios in 583 or 584.

JOHN HANSON

39

Amulet

Sixth or seventh century
Gold, diameter 1.95 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 875
PROVENANCE: found Kratego, Mytilene, Lesbos
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p. 327, no. 1, fig. 1; Athens 1964, no. 388, p. 364; Spier 1987, no. 7, p. 9, fig. 7.a-b; Thessaloniki 1997a, no. 226, p. 199; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 143, no. 6a3, fig. 14; Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The amulet is in the form of a small disc, defined by a thin, slightly exergue band. One face is decorated with a relief cross, the uneven arms of which have flaring ends, while the interstices are filled with incised schematic acanthus leaves. The disc is surrounded by a granulated border, at the top of which is attached a wide ring for hanging the amulet. On the other face is a mount (diameter 1.35 cm), defined by a very thin frame of lapis lazuli, now broken into small pieces. The mount obviously held a precious stone or a cameo, as in some of the known amulets of the same type (see Spier 1987, nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, p. 6, figs 1a–c, 2a–b, 3, 4a–b, 6a–b; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p. 144, no. 6b, 6b.5, with bibliography). In amulet-pendants like this one from the Kratergos treasure, the obverse has a precious stone or cameo, while the reverse is decorated with a cross.

EUGENIA CHALKIA

40

A pair of gold earrings

Constantinople (?), sixth or seventh century
Gold, length 7.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J.428
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), second treasure, 1902
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1906, p. 11, figs 7a, b; Pierides 1971, p. 53, pl. XXXVIII.3

To each plain gold loop are soldered four small rings, each supporting a pendant consisting of a fine loop-in-loop chain terminating in a pearl. These earrings are part of the two Lambousa treasures found in 1902, which in all give a picture of a household of significant luxury living outside Constantinople in the sixth or early seventh century. It is very likely that the household was an imperial appointment to the island and formed part of the aristocracy of Constantinople. Alternatively, the treasure might indicate the possible environment of luxury that a provincial family on a prosperous island could enjoy.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

41

Chain ornament and coin

Constantinople (?), sixth–seventh century
Gold, length 29 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv. no. J. 430
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), second treasure, 1902
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1906, fig. 7; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 30, fig. 39; Pierides 1971, p. 54, pl. XXXVIII.1

This gold chain is composed of loops connected to

each other with figure-of-eight-shaped links. At one end is a leaf-shaped finial, which was probably suspended from an ornament, but this was not found. The clasp on the other end does not belong to the chain; it consists of a *solidus* of Justin II and Tiberios II struck in Constantinople in 578. This is another piece from the rich Lambousa treasure, which was collected together in a house in Lambousa in the early seventh century and subsequently (perhaps in 653 or 654) buried for safekeeping; it was only recovered in 1902.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

42

Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 613–629/30
Silver, diameter 36.8 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv.no.J. 436
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1961, no.54, p.170; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p.40, fig.30

This large, flat silver plate has a niello cross at the centre, surrounded by a floral wreath. Found in 1902 as part of the second Lambousa treasure, it is another piece that reveals the range of materials and luxury of this hidden treasure.

The study and dating of Byzantine silver plates and their decoration was revolutionised in the course of the twentieth century, notably by the studies of Leonid Matsulevich in 1929 of the holdings of the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and by the systematic work of Erica Cruikshank Dodd in London, who was greatly helped in her catalogue of silver stamps by the presence in London in 1958 of objects from Russia for the exhibition of Byzantine art at the Victoria and Albert Museum (her London doctorate was finished in 1958 and published in 1961). This work gave a chronology for Early Byzantine silver and proved that there was no gradual 'decline' from Classical styles and workmanship in the Middle Ages. On the contrary, some of the pieces which are the most 'Classical' in style are among the latest produced. The sequence of date-stamped silver comes to an end in the seventh century, but this is for historical and not aesthetic reasons. The Persian wars of Herakleios (610–41) drained the treasury and from 621 he was in such financial difficulties that he called in all the treasures from every church in the capital and melted them down to use for silver coins to pay the army. After this disruption the stamping system fell into disuse, even when churches could begin to replenish their treasuries.

Not all Byzantine silver plates are stamped, and unstamped pieces can only now be dated by style. Those that were stamped usually had five hallmarks, giving the names of the emperor and imperial official at the treasury, among other information. This example is unusual in having at least seven stamps, some of which are very worn. This suggests that it was stamped on two separate occasions, perhaps because it was sent back to the workshop for re-authentication, possibly due to a change in ownership. The stamps show that it belongs in the reign of Herakleios.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

43

Silver plate with cruciform monogram

Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 44.2 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv.no.J. 455
PROVENANCE: Lambousa (Kyrenia District), 1902
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1961, no.33, p.126; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p.47, fig.31

This large silver plate has a central wreath of leaves and a monogram in niello framed by two gilded bands. It is another piece from the second Lambousa treasure. Date stamps on the reverse date it to the reign of Phokas (602–10). The stamps include the name of Athanasios, who was *comes sacrarum largitionum* up to 605, when he was killed by Phokas. This official, the Master of the Sacred Largesse, was in charge of the imperial finances. He controlled all the mints, and was responsible for collecting taxes and customs duties, and supervised state factories, trade and mines, budgets for the civil service and the army, and supplied all uniforms. The title dates from the sixth century and tenure of the office was (prudently) kept short, to two or at most three years. The system of silver stamps lapsed from the middle of the seventh century, as also, apparently, did the organisation of the treasury in this form.

One problem in interpreting silver with date stamps from Constantinople is whether all such plates were decorated there or whether the stamped pieces were taken to workshops in other parts of the empire, such as the cities of Asia Minor, to be worked. Examination shows that in this plate, as in others, the relief decoration was carried out after the stamps had been applied (they are in part obliterated by this decoration).

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

44

Silver plate with cross

Constantinople, 578–82
Silver with niello inlay, diameter 26.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.1
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.397; Dodd 1961, no.28; London 1977, no.174; London 1994, no.96

This plate, having a concave surface, is a *lanx*. It has a rounded outer rim and stands on a low foot-ring. Its central medallion, composed of concentric gilded bands, encloses an ivy scroll encircling a Latin cross, both inlaid with niello. On the reverse, inside the footring, are five imperial control stamps of Tiberios II Constantine (578–82). This plate forms part of the first Cyprus treasure found at the end of the nineteenth century that also includes spoons (cats 101, 102), a censer (cat.36) and a bowl (cat.45).

This type of silver plate with a small central cross differs from a church paten, which has a flat inner surface, sloping vertical walls and a large engraved central cross, usually surrounded by an ecclesiastical dedicatory inscription. This *lanx* belongs to the largest category of domestic silver, namely serving or dinner plates made in three general sizes (large, medium, as here, and small). The central ornament on this type of plate varies, and can be a monogram, a cross, a rosette or other motif. The cross motif may be viewed as a Christian element introduced into the domestic sphere where it is also seen on other objects of everyday use (Engemann 1972). In its present position, the cross can also be compared to the owner's cruciform monogram, which, for example, adorns other plates. Serving plates occur frequently in domestic silver treasures within the empire and have often been found singly outside it.

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

45

Bowl with portrait of a saint

Tarsus (?), 641–51
Silver, niello inlay, diameter 24.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.2
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.398; Dodd 1961, no.38; Volbach 1961, p.269; Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p.61; London 1977, no.175; New York 1979, no.493; London 1994, no.13

The bowl stands on a flaring foot and has an upper horizontal rim ornamented in relief. Inside the bowl is decorated with a half-length portrait of a saint encircled by a niello-inlaid frieze of overlapping circles between two wave patterns. Underneath the bowl, inside the foot-ring, are five imperial control stamps of Constans II (641–68), apparently applied at Tarsus.

The nimbed saint holds a cross in his right hand. He is beardless and has tightly curled hair. He wears a tunic and chlamys, the latter held by a cross-bow fibula. Around his neck is the *maniakion*, the torque of the palace guard. The saint portrayed is often identified as Sergios, martyred with Bacchos in fourth-century Syria. The bowl lacks any inscription either identifying the saint or dedicating the object itself to a church. It has been suggested that the bowl recalls the story of two silver plates commissioned in Alexandria by Eutropius. One, inscribed with his own name, he offered to the Church of St Menas. The other, inscribed with the name of St Menas, he was to use for meals at home until his death, when it was to be presented to the same church. In the present case, the object has the portrait rather than the name of a saint. As with the silver serving plate found with it (cat.44), the bowl represents the introduction of Christian elements into the domestic sphere.

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

46

Mummy panel with the portrait of a woman

Hawara, 55–70
Encaustic on thin panel of limewood, 40.5 × 22.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, EA 74716
PROVENANCE: excavated in 1911
SELECTED REFERENCES: Doxiadis 1995, no.48, p.200; Cormack 1997, especially pp.65–74; London 1997, no.17, pp.43–4

This is a portrait of a woman living in Roman Egypt and is naturalistic in style – but that does not mean it must be a 'realistic' likeness of a sitter rather than a conventional portrait type. She wears gold ball earrings, a gold chain with a pendant crescent and (originally) an ornamental chain across her hair – all jewellery familiar from portraits of the third quarter of the first century. Her face fills the panel and her eyes are large and rounded with arched eyebrows.

Traces of mummy wrappings at the arched upper corners demonstrate that the panel was designed to be inserted into a mummy containing her embalmed body. This is one of the earliest in date of around 500 portraits excavated in pits at cemeteries in Hawara (south-east Fayum). They represent the better-off among the Greek-speaking men and women who lived and died there, and who adopted Egyptian funeral practices. The panels are painted, using either wax encaustic (as in this case) or egg tempera.

Such panels from Roman Egypt are often regarded as the source of the Byzantine icon, and there are clear connections in style between these portraits and early icons (such as cats 47, 313, 314). But the evidence is that panel paintings of humans and pagan gods were made all around the Mediterranean, both for domestic and sacred display, and that, in the wall paintings of the houses of Pompeii, portraiture was included among the imagery. The development of the icon emerges from the practices of Greco-Roman art rather than simply the funerary practices of Egypt (the production of Fayum portraits stopped in the mid-third century). The evidence of icons from the Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai is that encaustic continued in use until the eighth century, but was then almost entirely abandoned (the skills of encaustic painting were perhaps the casualties of iconoclasm).

ROBIN CORMACK

47

Icon with Virgin and Child

Rome or Constantinople, around 610
Paint on elm, 160 × 47.5 cm

Basilica di Santa Maria ad Martyres-Pantheon, Rome
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bertelli 1961, De Blaauw 1994, Rome 2000a, no.376, pp.661–62 (M.Andaloro, with bibliography); Brenk 2003; Pace 2004

The icon is a fragment of what may originally have been a monumental image of the Virgin and Child, perhaps 240 cm high and 85 cm in width. Examples of such standing figures of the Virgin are found in the Rabbula Gospels (painted in Syria in 586) or the seventh-century mosaic apse at Kiti, Cyprus. The right hand of the Virgin is gilded, according to a devotional practice which is also found in sixth-century mosaics at St Demetrios at Thessaloniki and, slightly later, in Durrës (Cormack 1985, p.84), as well as in the Haghiosoritissa icon from the Monasterium tempuli in Rome. As a work from the city of Rome when the capital of the 'Roman Empire' was Constantinople, it hardly makes sense to establish whether this icon is 'Roman' or 'Byzantine', as it is perfectly aligned with the religiosity of its times. For lack of positive comparisons, style cannot answer the question, even if at least the monumentality of this icon, as well as of the earlier sixth-century Madonna from Santa Maria Antiqua (now in Santa Francesca Romana), seems a specific character of the Roman images, unchallenged in Constantinople (but see Brenk 2003).

More certain is the function of this monumental icon. It was made for worship in the newly converted Pantheon at Rome. Previously a temple built by Hadrian in honour 'of all the gods', the Pantheon was reconsecrated around 610 as a church dedicated to the 'ever-virgin Mary and all the martyrs'. This information comes from the life of Pope Boniface IV (608–15) in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which records that he asked the Emperor Phokas (602–10) for the temple and that the emperor presented many gifts to the new church (*The Book of the Pontiffs* [*Liber Pontificalis*], translated with an introduction by Raymond Davis, Liverpool, 1989, p.64). The conversion of the Pantheon is also recorded by Bede: 'After Boniface had expelled every abomination from it, he made a church of it dedicated to the Holy Mother of God and all the martyrs of Christ, so that, when the multitudes of devils had been driven out, it might serve as a shrine for a multitude of saints' (*Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, Oxford, 1994, vol.2, p.4).

It is very likely that the Christianisation of the Pantheon was sealed by the presence of the icon, while its origins may either point to an import from Constantinople (as a gift from the emperor) or to Rome. It dates therefore between 608 and 610 (though for a date in 613 see De Blaauw 1994).

VALENTINO PACE

48

Silk with the Annunciation

Syria (?), *c*.800
Serge silk in five colours, 33.6 × 68.7 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv.no.61231
PROVENANCE: from the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran, Rome
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1982, no.39, pp.102–3 (M.E.Frazer); Vicenza 2007, pp.186–7, no.44 (G.Cornini)

This piece of fabric, with a few others of the same provenance, are all that remain of the fabulous gifts in silk and other luxury fabrics presented to the churches of Rome by the series of popes who were born in the Eastern Mediterranean in the seventh and eighth centuries. One surviving fragment bears the identical composition twice, an Annunciation between *rotae* superimposed and joined by knots, linked together by stylised plant elements. With its companion piece, decorated with a Nativity, it probably constituted a single piece of clothing; they were discovered with other similar examples in the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran in 1905. At the time of discovery, the fabric bearing the Annunciation was covering the inside of the silver casket, now also in the Museo Cristiano, and identified with the reliquary containing the *sandalia id est calciamenta Domini nostri Iesu Christi* mentioned in the sources (Giovanni Diacono, *De ecclesia Sancti Laurentii in palatio*, in Lauer 1906, pp.28–9; see Grisar 1907, pp.136–3, 177–9).

The silks show the influence of Byzantium. Seated on a richly jewelled throne, covered by a pearl-encrusted cushion, Mary is busy spinning the purple wool from which the veil of the Temple will be woven. The fabric decorated with the Annunciation and its twin with the Nativity have been the subjects of heated debate regarding the date and the stylistic area to which they belong. Alexandria or Syria or Constantinople are most often proposed, with dates fluctuating between the sixth and the ninth centuries. But historical and stylistic considerations seem to lead the place of manufacture back to Syria: evidence in the *Liber Pontificalis* relating to the papacy of Leo III (795–816) relates how this pope presented a piece of cloth with identical characteristics to the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe in Ravenna: *habentem in medio crucem de chrisoclabo cum orbiculis et rotas siricas habentes stories Adnuntiatione seu Natale Domini nostri Iesu Christi* (*Liber Pontificalis* 1955, II, pp.31–2, no.420). The years to which the testimony of the *Liber Pontificalis* relates are the same as the years of the foundation and first formation of the Lateran Treasury, so it is likely that the fabrics were woven at a similar date and the various fragments were placed inside the reliquaries in which they were found at the same time.

GUIDO CORNINI

49

Gospel according to St Matthew, folio 10*v*

Syria or Palestine, second half of sixth century
Manuscript on parchment, 30 × 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, suppl. Gr. 1286
PROVENANCE: bought in Sinop in 1899; Bibliothèque nationale, 1900
SELECTED REFERENCES: Omont 1901; Grabar 1948; Paris 1958, no. 1; New York 1979, no.442; Paris 1992, no.97, p.143; Vatican 2000, pp.125–9

The 43 folios known as the 'Codex Sinopensis' were acquired in the town of Sinop on the shores of the Black Sea by a French officer at the end of the nineteenth century. They contain fragments of St Matthew's Gospel written in gold ink on purple parchment. Five of the folios bear miniature paintings at the bottom of the page; these are placed in the space allotted in the non-illustrated pages to the last line of the text and the lower edge of the page. They depict Herod's feast, and four miracles of Jesus, including the first and second miracle of the loaves and fishes, the healing of the two blind men of Jericho and the miracle of the withered fig tree. Each scene is framed by two characters from the Old Testament unfurling a scroll in front of them. On each scroll is inscribed the Old Testament text relating to the episode represented.

There is no direct evidence that would allow us to date the execution of this luxurious manuscript with any certainty, or to guess where it was made. It is possible nevertheless to suggest comparisons with two other illustrated Greek biblical manuscripts executed on purple parchment. The placing of the miniature paintings in a band across the whole width of the page recalls the presentation of the miniatures in the Vienna Genesis. The emphatic representation of biblical figures can also be found in the Codex purpureus Rossanensis (the Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark) in which most of the New Testament scenes are introduced by four figures from the Old Testament placed at a lower level. The palaeographic characteristics of the Codex Sinopensis and of the two manuscripts quoted above suggest that they came from the same centre, in other words the same Syrian or Palestinian scriptorium in the second half of the sixth century.

CHRISTIAN FÖRSTEL

50

Psalter with Christ praying and with the Crucifixion and an iconoclast, folio 67*r*

Constantinople, soon after 843
Parchment, 21 × 17.5 cm

The State Historical Museum, Moscow, GIM 86795 Khlud. 129-d
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sceptkina 1977; New York 1997, no.52, pp.97–8 (K. Corrigan)

This manuscript, known as the Khludov Psalter after the name of the Russian scholar who brought it from Mount Athos to Moscow in 1847, contains the psalms in the Septuagint version; in the margins of the pages it has 209 miniatures on 159 folios. The text was originally written in uncials (majuscule) with 23 lines to a page and with liturgical headings that have been identified as correct for the services of St Sophia at Constantinople; by the twelfth century most of the text had faded and was overwritten in minuscules.

An immense amount of attention was given to the illustrations, which are like a visual commentary on the psalms, sometimes literal, sometimes highly evocative. A number of the illustrations allude directly to iconoclasm, and since they refer to the triumph of the iconophiles, they are best dated to the years immediately after 843. Various suggestions have been made about possible sponsors of this well-used manuscript, the most favoured candidates both being Patriarchs of Constantinople, Methodios (843–47) or Photios (858–67 and 877–86). According to a note in the manuscript, it was on the island of Chalce, near Constantinople, in 1648.

Folios 66*v* and 67*r* give a prime example of the principles followed by the designer of the book. On the left page, verse 18 (17) of Psalm LXVIII (LXIX) is highlighted with a blue marker: 'Hide not your face from your servant; for I am in distress, make haste to answer me.' This is interpreted as a reference to Christ, who is shown (also with a marker) praying in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest (the reference is clinched with a label in Greek (on the Passion of the Lord). On the right page the text marker is to verse 22 (21): 'They gave me gall and vinegar.' This is illustrated with the Crucifixion and Christ's persecutors (the inscription says, 'they mixed vinegar and gall'). This image is then glossed with a second one, 'Iconoclasts mixed water and lime on his face'. The figure whitewashing an icon of Christ is in the portrait type of the iconoclast patriarch John the Grammarian (837–43). The moral is that iconoclasts are as evil as those who taunted Christ on the Cross, a piece of strong visual polemic.

ROBIN CORMACK

51

Psalter with Crucifixion, iconoclasts and simoniac priests, folio 87*v*–88*r*

Monastery of St John Stoudios, Constantinople, 1066
Parchment, 24.8 × 25.5 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 19352
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1997, no.53, pp.98–9 (J.C.Anderson); Barber 2000

This book with the Psalms and Odes in the order of the Septuagint, known as the Theodore Psalter, has a colophon (fol. 208*r*) with detailed information about its production. It was written by the scribe, the priest Theodore from Caesarea, at the order of the abbot Michael of the famous Monastery of St John Stoudios, and finished in February 6574 (= 1066). Lowden (in Barber 2000) makes the case for Theodore being also the artist. The aim of this luxury book with 435 miniatures and lavish use of gold was to promote the monastery, its famous iconophile Abbot Theodore the Studite (759–826) and its present abbot Michael too. Directly, or through a copy of it, the designer of the psalter knew the miniatures of the Khludov Psalter (cat.50), and often adapts its miniatures, while adding many more images of monastic saints and implying through his prominence that Theodore the Studite was the prime mover against iconoclasm.

The opening on folios 87*v* and 88*r* shows its reuse of the visual commentary found in the Khludov Psalter at Psalm LXVIII (LXIX). On the left, verse 22 (21), 'They gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink', is illustrated with the Crucifixion. The facing page has two iconoclasts in action as the mirror image. The text is verse 26 (27): 'because they persecuted him whom you have smitten; and they have added to the grief of my wounds'. Below this polemical picture is another one of iconoclasts, shown as simoniacs (open to bribery and corruption like Simon Magus in the Gospels). Their text is verse 27 (28): 'Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous.'

This imagery shows that even two centuries after the end of iconoclasm its trauma was recalled for the monks of the Stoudios monastery as a case where Orthodoxy had triumphed over heresy. The twist in the story here is that monks are given a major role in the struggle, as is also the case in the British Museum icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy (cat.57).

ROBIN CORMACK

52

The Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke

Constantinople (?), early ninth century
Cloisonné enamel, silver, silver-gilt, gold, niello, 10.3 × 7.1 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.715a, b)
PROVENANCE: by tradition, Pope Innocent IV (Sinibaldo Fieschi, d.1254); from a member of his family who brought it home from the Crusades; by tradition, Innocent IV wore it and then dedicated the relic to the Church of San Salvatore di Lavagna, near Genoa, in 1245; relic container retained by the Fieschi family or passed to the family in 1798, when the church became a parish church; reliquary case by descent to Countess Thellung; sold by her, Genoa, 1887; collection of Freiherr Albert von Oppenheim, Cologne; collection of J. Pierpont Morgan (see Dalton 1912a, pp.65–9; Williamson 1913, pp.296–301); gift of J.Pierpont Morgan, 1917
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1912a; Williamson 1913, pp.296–7; New York 1979, no.547, pp.634–6 (M.E. Frazer); Buckton 1982, pp.35–6; Kartsonis 1986; Buckton 1988; New York 1997, no.34, p.74 (T. F. Mathews); Hildesheim 1998, no.18, pp.49–55, 155 (G. Mietke); Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001, p.39; Klein 2004a

From the time of the Byzantine emperor Herakleios (610–41), the remains of what was believed to be the True Cross were housed in Constantinople. Pieces of the Cross were given as the most valuable of imperial gifts, often housed in elaborate box-like containers, such as this one. Elaborately worked in cloisonné enamel, the lid of the box displays Christ on the Cross wearing the full-length garment (colobion) found in early images of the Crucifixion. To his sides Mary and John each raise a hand to their face in a gesture of mourning; John XIX, 26–7 is inscribed around the Cross. Twenty-seven busts of varied saints appear on the lid and sides of the box. On the undersurface of the lid four scenes of the life of Christ – the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Crucifixion and the Anastasis – are worked in niello. The interior of the box houses a cross-shaped container for the relic with the remaining space possibly meant to contain other relics. The patterns on the base resemble a book cover, possibly a reference to the Gospels that contain the story of the Crucifixion. The whole is a testament to the promise of salvation through Christ and his sacrifice.

The reliquary's date and place of origin have been extensively debated. At one time thought to be an early work from Jerusalem (summary by M.E.Frazer in New York 1979, pp.634–6), the reliquary is now dated to the early ninth century and argued to be from Constantinople (Kartsonis 1986, pp.94–125; Mathews in New York 1997, p.74; Mietke in Hildesheim 1998, pp.49–55, 155; Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001, p.39; Klein 2004a, p.104). The enamel work has been recognised as unusual for Byzantium at this date and thus possibly the work of a foreigner from the West (Buckton 1982; Kartsonis 1986, pp.118, 123; Buckton 1988, pp.242–4). What is certain is that the relic, originally the most important aspect of the whole, must have come from Constantinople. As seen in other examples, such as the tenth-century Vatican staurotheke and the later Morgan triptych, True Cross relics were usually provided with containers in Constantinople even if these were elaborated elsewhere (see New York 1997, no.35, pp.76–7 [A.Weyl Carr] and no.301, pp.461–3 [W.Voelkle]).

HELEN C. EVANS

53

Pectoral reliquary cross

Probably Constantinople, second half of ninth or tenth century

Gold, niello, wood, total height 7.2 cm; outermost cross 4.2 × 3.2 cm; internal cross 4 × 3 cm; innermost cross (the relic) 3.7 × 2.7 cm

National Archaeological Institute and Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, inv. no. 4882
PROVENANCE: Pliska, capital of the first Bulgarian kingdom, seventh to ninth century; found in 1973 during excavations in the western sector of its fortress wall, 1973
SELECTED REFERENCES: Doncheva-Petkova 1979; Rome 2000b, no.35, p.145

This reliquary is composed of three crosses inserted into one another. Two are golden and one wooden with the relic mounted on it.

Miniature scenes executed in niello decorate both golden crosses. The external cross bears seven Christological scenes: front, above, the Annunciation; left, the Nativity; right, the Presentation in the Temple; below, the Baptism; centre, the Transfiguration; reverse, above, Christ enthroned within a medallion supported by four angels; below, the Anastasis; over the horizontal arm, the Ascension with the Virgin Mary and the twelve Apostles. The inscriptions read: front, above, 'Ave'; left, 'Nativity'.

The internal cross features the Crucifixion and the Holy Virgin: front, Christ on the cross, with the Virgin Mary and St John the Evangelist on each side, the tablet with Christ's monogram, the sun and the moon. The cross rises above Golgotha with the skull of Adam. On the reverse can be seen the Virgin Nicopois (Bringer of Victory), surrounded by the holy bishops within medallions: St John Chrysostom, St Gregory the Theologian, St Nicholas and St Basil. The inscriptions read: front, 'Jesus Christ; below His shoulders – Here is thy Son, Here is thy Mother'; below, 'Place of the Skull'; reverse, at both sides of Virgin Mary, 'the Holy Mother of God'; vertical arm, above, 'Chrysostom'; below, 'Basil'; left, 'Nicholas'. All the inscriptions are in Greek. The relic itself, perhaps coming from Golgotha, lies below an opening in the innermost cross.

The Pliska reliquary seems to be a product of a workshop in Constantinople. It probably came to Bulgaria as a royal gift after the conversion of the Bulgarians to Christianity in 864. Two more masterpieces associated with the same skilful handiwork are known: the Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke in the Metropolitan Museum in New York (cat.52) and the silver cross of Vicopisano (see Biehl 1919–32).

KATYA MELAMED

54

The Beresford Hope Cross

Byzantium, second half of the ninth century
Gold cloisonné enamel mounted on silver gilt, 8.7 × 5.8 × 1.8 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 265-1886
PROVENANCE: Debruge Duménil Collection; Beresford Hope Collection; bought by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1886
SELECTED REFERENCES: Labarte 1847, pp.569–71; Kondakov 1892, pp.176–7, figs. 49–50 (German edition); Dalton 1911, p.506; Rosenberg 1922, pp.52–6; Reil 1930, pp.74, 103–4; Hackenbroch 1938, pp.16–18; Edinburgh 1938, no.185; Athens 1964, pp.392–3 (M.C.Ross); Wessel 1967, no.8; Campbell 1983, p.15, pl.5; London 1984, pp.124, 127, fig.9a (M. E. Frazer); London 1994, no.141 (D.Buckton)

The Beresford Hope Cross is a silver-gilt pectoral cross, hinged to open, with a cruciform gold cloisonné enamel plaque mounted on either face.

The front depicts Christ crucified between half-figures of the Mother of God and St John the Evangelist. Above these figures are the sun and a crescent moon, while below them is Adam's skull, signifying Golgotha. On either side of the skull is an empty triangular setting; there is considerable damage to this half of the cross. Clumsy Greek inscriptions in gold strip set on edge in the enamel represent the conventional abbreviation for 'Jesus Christ' and Christ's words from the Cross: 'Behold your son!… Behold your mother!' (John XIX, 26–7).

The back of the cross shows the Mother of God full-length in an attitude of prayer and surrounded by the busts of different saints – John the Baptist (at the top), Peter (to the left), Andrew (to the right) and Paul (below), all identified by inscriptions.

The backgrounds against which the figures appear are translucent green, typical of the first phase of Byzantine cloisonné enamelling – from the end of iconoclasm in 843 to around the middle of the tenth century. The figure-drawing and the enamelling are not very competent, possibly suggesting manufacture early on in this period. Enamel is coloured glass: when heated to its melting-point, glass bonds with metal to form a laminate. In cloisonné enamelling, the composite surface of glass and gold strip is then finished by grinding and polishing.

Made to contain a relic, almost certainly a sliver of the True Cross, the Beresford Hope Cross would have been worn on a chain around the neck.

DAVID BUCKTON

55.1–29

Group of Byzantine coins

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham. The Henry Barber Trust Collection

PROVENANCE: Cats 55.1, 55.3, 55.6–11 and 55.13–28 form part of the P. D.Whiting Collection. Cats 55.2, 55.4–5 and 55.12 form part of the G. Haines Collection. Cat.55.29 forms part of the Despot Collection of Palaiologan coins.

55.1

Solidus of Constantine I (303–37), RS095

Mint of Nicomedia, 335
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm
Obverse: Constantine I with diadem
Reverse: Victory on a shield held by Genius.
VICTORIACONSTANTINIAVG (the Victory of Constantine, Augustus); SMNC

55.2

Follis of Constantine I (307–37), RS079

Mint of Constantinople, 330–35
Bronze, diameter 1.9 cm
Obverse: helmeted female bust. VRBS ROMA (City of Rome).
Reverse: she-wolf suckling Romulus and Remus; CONSE

55.3

Solidus of Constans (337–50), RS434

Mint of Thessaloniki, 337–40
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm
Obverse: bust of Constans. FLIVLCON STANS PFAVG (Flavius Julius Constans Augustus, the Pious, the Fortunate)
Reverse: Victory with spear, trophy and palm branch.
VICTORIA DDNNAVGG; TES

55.4

Follis of Constantius II (337–61), RS338

Mint of Trier, 350–53
Copper, diameter 2.3 cm
Obverse: bust of Constantius II. DNCONSTAN TIVSPFAVG

Reverse: X P (Chi-Rho) flanked by A and ω.
SALVSAVGNOSTRI; TRS

55.5

Solidus of Valentinian II (375–92), LR155

Mint of Constantinople, 383–88
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Valentinian II. DNVALENTINI ANVSPFAVG
Reverse: personification of Constantinople. CONCORDI AAVCCCE; CONOB

55.6

Solidus of Anastasios I (491–518), B6

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Anastasios I. DNANASTA SIVSPERPAVC
Reverse: Victory with long, jewelled cross. VICTORI AAVCCCI; CONOB

55.7

Solidus of Justinian I (527–65), B338

Mint of Constantinople, 545–65
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm
Obverse: bust of Justinian I holding *globus cruciger* and shield. DNIVSTINI ANVSPPAVI
Reverse: angel holding *globus cruciger* and Christogram-topped staff. VICTORI AAVCCCS; CONOB

55.8

Solidus of Justin II (565–78), B1132

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Justin II holding globe topped by Victory and shield. DNIVSTI NVSPPAVI
Reverse: seated personification of Constantinople, holding spear and *globus cruciger*. VICTORI AACCCΔ; CONOB

55.9

Solidus of Phokas (602–10), B2423

Mint of Constantinople, 603
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm
Obverse: bust of Phokas holding *mappa circensis*, a cloth waved by the consul to start games in circus, and a cross. ONFOCAE PERPAVC
Reverse: angel holding Christogram-topped long staff and *globus cruciger*. VICTORI AAVCCI; CONOB

55.10

Solidus of Herakleios (610–41), B2881

Mint of Constantinople, 629–31
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm
Obverse: busts of Herakleios and Herakleios Constantine; small cross between. DDNNHERACLIUSETHERACONSTPPAV (our Lords Herakleios and Herakleios Constantine, Augustoi)
Reverse: cross potent on base and three steps. VICTORIA AVGUΘ; CONOB

55.11

Solidus of Justinian II (first reign 685–95), B4381

Mint of Constantinople, 692–95
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ, right hand raised in blessing, left holding the Gospel-book. IHSCRIST[ ]REX REGNANTIUM (Jesus Christ, Ruler of those who rule)
Reverse: standing figure of Justinian II, holding cross potent on steps in right hand, and *akakia* (silk roll of dust, held by emperors during functions to remind them of the transience of life) in his left. DIUSTINIAN USSERUCHRISTI (Our Lord Justinian, Servant of Christ); at end, A (vertical); CONOP

55.12

Solidus of Justinian II (second reign 705–11), B4463

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ, cross behind head, right hand raised in blessing, left holding the Gospel-book. DNIHSCHSREX REGNANTIUM
Reverse: Justinian II to left and infant son Tiberios to right; between them cross potent on base and two steps. DNIUSTINIAN USETTIBERIUSPPA (Our Lords Justinian and Tiberios, Augustoi)

55.13

Solidus of Leo IV (775–80), B4584

Mint of Constantinople, 776–78
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: busts of Leo IV to left and Constantine VI to right. Cross between them.
LEONVSSESSONCONSTANTINOSONEO (Leo and Constantine the Young)
Reverse: busts of Leo III to left and Constantine V to right. Cross between them. LEONPAP'CONSTANTINOSPATHR (Leo Grandfather and Constantine Father)

55.14

Solidus of Irene (797–802), B4609

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Irene, holding *globus cruciger* in right hand and cross sceptre in left. EIRINH BASILISSH (Irene, Queen)
Reverse: as obverse. ·EIRINH BASILISSHΘ (Irene, Queen)

55.15

Solidus of Michael III (842–67), B4744

Mint of Constantinople, 842–43 (?)
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm
Obverse: bust of Theodora holding *globus cruciger* in right hand and cross sceptre in left. +ΘЄOƆO RAƆESPVNS (Theodora, Despoina)
Reverse: three-quarter figures of Michael III holding *globus cruciger* to left and his sister Thekla to right, holding long patriarchal cross. ·MIXAHLSΘ ECLA (Michael and Thekla)

55.16

Solidus of Michael III (842–67), B4745

Mint of Constantinople, 843 (?)–56
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross behind head, raising hand in blessing and holding the Gospel-book. IHSЧSX RISTOS (Jesus Christ)
Reverse: busts of Michael III to left, and Theodora to right. +MIXAHL SΘE OƆORA (Michael and Theodora)

55.17

Solidus of Leo VI (896–912), B4807

Mint of Constantinople, 886–908
Gold, diameter 1.9 cm
Obverse: bust of Virgin Orans +MARIA+ and MR ΘЧ (Mother of God)
Reverse: bust of Leo VI holding globe surmounted by patriarchal cross. LEONENCRISTOBASILEЧSROMEON (Leo, in Christ Emperor of the Romans)

55.18

Solidus of Romanos I Lekapenos (920–44), co-emperor with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), B4842

Mint of Constantinople, 921–31
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: Christ with cruciform nimbus, seated on lyre-backed throne, hand raised in blessing, and holding the Gospel-book. +IHSXPSREX REGNANTIЧM
Reverse: busts of Romanos I to left and Christopher to right, holding patriarchal cross between them.
ROMAN'ETXPISTOFO'AЧGGL' (Romanos and Christopher, Augustoi)

55.19

Solidus of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), B4855A

Mint of Constantinople, 945
Gold, diameter 2 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ with cruciform nimbus, hand raised in blessing, and holding the Gospel-book.
+IHSXPSREXREGNANTIЧM
Reverse: bust of Constantine VII, holding in right hand *globus cruciger* topped by patriarchal cross. CONSTAN'T'AVT'CRA 'TR (Constantine, Emperor of the Romans)

55.20

Histamenon of John I (969–76), B49543

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2.2 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ Pantokrator with cross nimbus, hand raised in blessing and holding Gospels. +IHSXISREXR EGNANTINM
Reverse: John I, holding globe, is blessed by the Virgin, and crowned by *Manus Dei* (the Hand of God).
+ΘЄOTOC'BOHΘ'IѠƆESP (Mother of God aid John Despot)

55.21

Histamenon of Basil II (976–1025), B4969

Mint of Constantinople, 989 (?)–1001
Gold, diameter 2.4 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross nimbus, right hand raised in blessing, left resting on the Gospel-book.
+IHSXISREXREGNANTIЧM
Reverse: busts of Basil II to left, and Constantine VIII to right, holding between them patriarchal cross crosslet.
+BASILCCONSTANTIBR (Basil and Constantine Emperors of the Romans)

55.22

Histamenon of Romanos IV (1068–71), B5423

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2.7 cm
Obverse: three brothers stand on cushions: Constantine (left) and Andronikos (right) hold *globus cruciger* and *akakia* and Michael VII (centre), labarum and *akakia*. KѠN MX ANΔ
Reverse: Christ crowns Romanos IV to left and Eudokia to right, each carrying *globus cruciger*. +PѠMANS EVΔKIIIM to the left and right; IC XC in field

55.23

Trachy of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–80), B5781

Mint of Thessaloniki
Electrum (alloy of gold and silver), diameter 3.3 cm
Obverse: the Virgin holds a medallion with the Christ Child in her lap. MP ΘV
Reverse: standing figures of Manuel I to left, holding *akakia*, and St Demetrios to right, holding between them a labarum. MANUIHA ΔЄCII· (Manuel, Despot)·ΔH[ ]T[ ] (Demetrios)

55.24

Hyperpyron of Isaac II Angelos (1185–95), B5864

Mint of Constantinople
Gold, diameter 2.8 cm
Obverse: The Virgin holds the nimbate Christ Child in her lap. MP ΘV
Reverse: Isaac II to left holding labarum-headed sceptre, and Archangel Michael to right; both hold a sword between them. ICAAKIOC (Isaac). X X AP MX (Archangel Michael)

55.25

Hyperpyron of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–82), B6151

Mint of Constantinople, 1261–82
Gold, diameter 2.4 cm
Obverse: half figure of the Virgin Orans, within the walls of Constantinople. M Θ
Reverse: Archangel Michael presents Michael VIII, who is kneeling before Enthroned Christ. X/ΠA/K; IC XC; AP/M

55.26

Hyperpyron of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), B6189

Mint of Constantinople, 1282–94
Gold, diameter 2.3 cm
Obverse: half figure of the Virgin Orans, within the walls of Constantinople. BM; **
Reverse: Andronikos II prostrate before Christ, who blesses the emperor, and holds the Gospels. ANΔP/NIKOC/[ ]NXѠ/ [ ]ΠO/[ ]COΠI/AAE/OΛ/T (Andronikos Palaiologos, Despot in Christ); IC/XC

55.27

Trachy of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328), B6210

Mint of Thessaloniki, 1282–94
Copper, diameter 2.1 cm
Obverse: half-length figure of St Demetrios, holding sword and shield. OA/T; MH/TPI (Saint Demetrios)
Reverse: Andronikos II, holding *globus* topped by patriarchal cross, and fleur-de-lis-topped sceptre. AN[ ]KA/ITT/EA (Andronikos Palaiologos, Despot)

55.28

Stavraton of John VIII (1425–48), B6492

Mint of Constantinople
Silver, diameter 2.9 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ with cross nimbus; pellets in outer circle. IC XC
Reverse: bust of John VIII.
+IѠΔEΠO.T.ICOΠAAEOΛOГOC/[ ]XAP.IT.H.BAC
[ ]PѠMAIѠN+ (Despot John Palaiologos, Emperor of the Romans by the Grace of God)

55.29

One eighth *stavraton* of Constantine XI (1448–53), 4-2006

Mint of Constantinople, 1449–53
Silver, diameter 1.3 cm
Obverse: bust of Christ. IC XC
Reverse: bust of Constantine. XI K C

In a world without electronic and printed media, imagery and inscriptions on Byzantine coins (Whitting 1973; Grierson 1982 and 1999b; Georganteli 2008) provided one of the most powerful media through which imperial and religious ideology reached individuals within and outside the borders of the empire through networks of trade, pilgrimage, war and intermarriage with Western and Eastern royal families (London 2006A). Constantine the Great widely advertised the foundation of Constantinople by making iconographical references on his coins to the legendary building of Rome by Romulus in the eighth century BC. Coins from the fourth to the sixth century struck in Constantinople continued to convey this message by depicting traditional symbols of Rome. The she-wolf suckling the twins (cat.55.2) and female personifications of Constantinople modelled on similar Roman types (cats 55.5, 55.8) bear witness to continual aspirations of successive rulers for their developing imperial capital (Bühl 1995, pp.61–77).

During the same period coins superbly mirror the Christianisation of the empire by gradually substituting Christian for pagan imagery and messages. The Greco-Roman symbol of Nike/Victoria (Victory) was transformed into an angel (cats 55.1, 55.3, 55.6, 55.7, 55.9) and the cult of Salus, which linked public welfare and prosperity to the emperor's person (Marwood 1988; Winkler 1995), was effortlessly combined on coins of the Constantinian dynasty with the Christian Chi-Rho (cat.55.4). The latter, together with the symbol of the Cross, first appeared on fourth-century coins, developing under Tiberios II (578–82) into the cross potent on steps, a motif that dominated the reverse of gold coins throughout the seventh century (cat.55.10). Until the fifteenth century the cross, either on its own or carried by the emperor, his associates or heavenly powers, remained a very distinct element of numismatic iconography across the spectrum of metallic values and denominations. The face of Christ appeared first on the gold *solidi* of Justinian II's first reign (685–95) as the 'Zeus-like' bearded and long-haired Pantokrator (cat.55.11). During Justinian II's second reign (705–11) Christ appeared again on the obverse of gold *solidi*, this time curly haired and short bearded (cat.55.12).

During iconoclasm emperors replaced the bust of Christ with crosses and their portraits. Other members of the imperial family are also shown (sons, fathers and forefathers), the final result being similar to family portraits (cat.55.13). Following the restoration of icons in 843 the 'Zeus-like' type of Christ was reintroduced on the obverse of coins struck by Empress Theodora (cat.55.16). From then onwards Christ standing, enthroned (cat.55.18), in bust holding the Gospel-book (cats 55.19–21), or crowning the imperial couple (cat.55.22) dominated the obverse of the Middle Byzantine coins. After 1261 Michael VIII (1259–82), Andronikos II (1282–1328) and Andronikos III (1328–41) struck on the reverse of their gold *hyperpyra* powerful compositions of Christ in the company of the emperor (cats 55.25–26). It is on the obverse of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century silver *basilika*, *stavrata* and their denominations that Christ makes his last appearance (cats 55.28–29). The style is distinctively Western and quite crude in comparison to earlier issues, reflecting the artistic references of Byzantine die-engravers and the dwindling resources of the shrunken Byzantine Empire.

Divine endorsement and heavenly protection of the empire were projected on Byzantine coins also through the display of the *Manus Dei* (Hand of God) crowning the emperors, and the Virgin, saints and angelic powers accompanying them (cats 55.20–6). The Virgin Mary was first shown on the gold *solidi* of Leo VI (886–912) (cat.55.17). From the tenth century her image, praying, holding the infant Christ or blessing the emperor became widespread on Byzantine coins (Penna 2000) (cats 55.20, 55.23–6). The Archangel Michael appears on the gold *hyperpyra* (cat.55.24), electrum *trachea* and copper *tetartera* of Isaac II (1185–95 and again 1203–04), reflecting this emperor's devotion to his cult (Choniates, *Historia* I, p.442; Hendy 1999, p.368). After 1261, Michael, warrior patron saint of the Palaiologoi, appears frequently on their coins alone, blessing the emperor or presenting him to Christ (cat.55.25), as a further reminder of the divine protection of the city of Constantinople and the empire (Talbot 1993, pp.258–61). St George's image is encountered mostly on Constantinopolitan coins, while that of St Demetrios, patron saint of Thessaloniki (Cormack 1989; Macrides 1990), on coins of this city in the company of the emperor (cat.55.23) or on his own (cat.55.27) (Georganteli 2001; Morrisson 2003) .

As for the imperial representation on coins, Byzantine rulers continually claimed to be the sole legitimate rulers of the old Roman Empire (Angelov 2007) through appropriate iconography and inscriptions. With the exception of a short-lived exploration of portraiture under Phokas (602–10) (cat.55.9), Leo VI (886–912) and Constantine VII (sole rule 945–59) (cats 55.17, 55.19), the majority of images are sheer icons of majesty with no reference to the physical likeness of actual people. The traditional Roman profile and three-quarter bust was abandoned in 538/39 under Justinian I (527–65) in favour of a facing one, while more complex compositions of emperors, their associates and heavenly powers on Middle and Late Byzantine coins advertised continuity of the institution and the earthly and divine protection of the empire. John V (1341–91) was the last emperor to issue gold coins, and the silver *stavraton* (worth half an old gold *hyperpyron*) became, from the 1360s, the main high-value currency for the last century of the empire's

existence (Grierson 1999A, pp.50–1, 200–1). The last *stavrata* and their denominations were struck under the orders of Emperor Constantine XI (1448–53) (Bendall 1991), days before the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans on 29 May 1453 (cat.55.29). These silver coins, made from reused church silver, represent payment for the few Western mercenaries who, together with Byzantine soldiers, made Byzantium's last stand on the walls of Constantinople.

The lives of princesses and empresses are a fascinating part of Byzantium's history, yet are rarely recorded in coinage (Garland 1999; Tobler and Brubaker 2000; James 2001; Herrin 2004). Mothers and regents during their sons' minority, daughters or wives, and only very rarely ruling in their own right, these powerful ladies shown in imperial robes, elaborate headdresses and jewellery offer a rare glimpse of the splendour and politics of the court. The depiction of Irene (797–802) on the obverse and reverse of her gold *solidi* (cat.55.14) proclaims her as sole ruler (*Basilissa*, the female Greek form of Emperor), a role that she achieved by the blinding and murder of Constantine VI, her own son and heir to the throne. In 843 the careful design of coins struck during Theodora's regency announced both the arrangements made for her infant son Michael III following the death of Emperor Theophilos and her role in the final restoration of icons (Grierson 1973, 1, pp.454–58). Theodora's prominent position on the obverse of Michael III's first gold *solidi* is coupled with her title 'Despoina' (female equivalent of Lord or Emperor), while her daughter Thekla appears also as co-ruler by being shown with Michael III on the reverse of the coins (cat.55.15). On the second series of Michael III's gold *solidi* Theodora is moved to the reverse, leaving the obverse to an image of Christ (cat.55.16).

In the eleventh century Empress Eudokia, widow of Constantine X and regent for her sons, advertised her marriage to Romanos IV Diogenes (1068–71) and his elevation to the position of co-emperor by reviving the iconography of fifth-century marriage *solidi*. Her three sons and co-emperors are depicted on the obverse of Romanos IV's gold *histamena*, while the magnificent reverse composition of the newly married couple being crowned by Christ legitimised the union and her new husband's imperial power in the eyes of their subjects (cat.55.22). This last example encapsulates the dual function of Byzantine coins as legal tender and miniature art, a medium with the capacity to reach large and diverse audiences over vast expanses of space and time.

EURYDICE S. GEORGANTELI

56

Lives of saints with St Euphemia, folio 121*v*–122*r*

Constantinople, around 1100
Parchment, 44.2 × 35 cm

The British Library, London, Add. 11870
PROVENANCE: entered the British Library between 1841 and 1843 as part of the Butler Collection
SELECTED REFERENCE: Walter 2000

This book is the first (and only known volume) of a series of books with the lives of the saints in the text established by Symeon Metaphrastes in the tenth century and arranged in order of the Church calendar. This has the saints for the months of September (the Byzantine year began on 1 September). The whole set would have consisted of perhaps ten books if each volume was as extensive as this one (273 folios). The name given to such a text is a menologion. Such books were very popular in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but of a thousand Metaphrastic menologia, only about fifty are illustrated and only ten of these contain cycles such as this one. It seems that the artist had access to other illustrated versions, and this suggests its orbit of production was Constantinople, perhaps even connected with court patronage.

Each saint's life is illustrated in the ornamented headpieces at the beginning of their lives, and painted on a gold ground. Among the September saints in this book are some who have special connections with the period of iconoclasm. On folio 121*r*, for example, St Euphemia is shown naked, her hands outstretched in prayer, being burnt alive (she was martyred at Chalcedon in the early fourth-century persecutions). Her relics were moved to a cult church in Constantinople, but the reliquary was thrown into the Bosporos in anger during iconoclasm. Her cult increased in popularity after iconoclasm.

Several of the miniatures underline the increase in the cult of saints in Byzantium after iconoclasm. On folio 60*r* is the event celebrated annually on 6 September, the miracle at Chonai. Archangel Michael prevents the devil from flooding the hut of the pious (and haloed) monk Archippos at Chonae by diverting the river water. The scene is framed by columns, which each have the conceit of a marble knot half way up. This is a feature found in church templon columns at this period, and so gives the impression that the miracle occurred in a sacred place.

ROBIN CORMACK

57

Icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy

Constantinople (?), second half of the fourteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 39 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. 1988.0411.1
PROVENANCE: in a private collection, Sweden, in 1984
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no.140, pp.129–30 (R. Cormack); Chatzidakis 1998, p.90; New York 2004, no.78, pp.154–5 (A. Weyl Carr); Kotoula 2006

The icon is entitled the Triumph of Orthodoxy in Greek in red letters (mostly now rubbed off); the figures were also named in red but these inscriptions too are abraded. This is the earliest known example of the subject, but a later copy of this actual icon gives some more saints' names (Chatzidakis 1998). It represents the collapse of iconoclasm, which was celebrated on 11 March 843 (and annually thereafter on the first Sunday in Lent), and the declaration by Church and State that icons were integral to the True Faith – Orthodoxy. But it was painted several centuries after the event, and this time lag means that there are several layers of meaning (Kotoula 2006). The composition is focused on an icon within the icon – the famous image of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria believed to be painted by St Luke, a story which emerged conveniently during iconoclasm, and which was employed as clinching evidence that icons were sanctioned in the faith. The red veil (*peplos*) has been unfurled and below the icon is a *podea*, the cloth that covers a holy altar. This gives the display of the icon a liturgical character in keeping with the character of the festival of Orthodoxy in the fourteenth century. Two (winged) guardians of the icon dressed in red stand on each side. In the upper register are the historical figures who ended iconoclasm, the regent Empress Theodora and her infant son Michael III to the left, and Patriarch Methodios and other high clergy to the right; below is a procession of famous iconophile champions, some, like St Theodosia at the left, carrying icons of Christ.

By the fourteenth century the Hodegetria icon was the most famous pilgrimage icon in Constantinople, and councils in 1341, 1347 and 1351 had updated the articles of the True Faith (written down in the *Synodikon* of Orthodoxy). Several of the saints represented were the subject of increasing veneration in Late Byzantium, such as St Theodosia, whose festival day of 29 May was being celebrated with a procession on the day the Ottomans entered Constantinople in 1453 – the same day that they hacked to pieces the icon of the Hodegetria.

The precise date and place of production is still a matter of debate, but the Monastery of the Hodegon, Constantinople, where the icon was kept, was a centre of artistic production at this period (for example, the illuminated *Akathistos Hymn* [Moscow, syn. Gr. 429]) and is a possible provenance.

ROBIN CORMACK

3
At Court

58

Icon of the Archangel Michael

Constantinople, twelfth century
Silver gilt on wood, gold cloisonné enamel, precious stones, 46.5 × 35 × 2.7 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no.16
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pasini 1886, no.2, p.72; Molinier 1888, pp.43–5, no.2, p.79; Gallo 1967, p.279, V., no.8; Hahnloser 1971, no.16, pp.23–5 (A.Grabar); Paris 1984, no.18, pp.171–3 (B Drake Boehm); Vicenza 2004, no.19, pp.120–2 (I. Merkel); Marcon 2007

This icon of the Archangel Michael, together with a similar one also in the Treasury of St Mark's, was probably part of the booty brought back from the Fourth Crusade in 1204; it is listed in the inventory of 1325. Its dimensions and the richness of its decoration make it an extremely rare surviving example of Byzantine goldwork; the embossed main figure is combined with sumptuous cloisonné enamel depicting an idealised Paradise garden whose entrance is guarded by the Archangel Michael.

The enamelling of the hair on the archangel's head is the single surviving example of this technique applied to an embossed element, while the enormous halo around the head demonstrates the boldness of this gifted artist's imagination.

The frame is decorated with a carpet of enamel work in which are arranged, on the upper fascia, three circular medallions with St Peter, Christ and St Menas; the saints on the lower edge are now lost. On the vertical edges four shield-shaped enamels depict eight soldier saints, protectors of the Christian forces, in pairs, each identified by name: the two St Theodores, St Demetrios and St Nestor, St Prokopios and St George, St Eustathios and St Mercurios. Recent restoration has revealed that during the 1834 restoration the archangel's large wings were renewed; these are now considered to be out of proportion with the figure of the archangel. Also during this restoration the gems and precious stones on the frame were replaced with slivers of coloured glass.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

59

Four Gospels, folio 19*v*

Second quarter of the twelfth century, Constantinople
Parchment, 18.6 × 13.7 cm. I-325 folios
Contents: Eusebios' letter to Carpianus (4*r*–6*v*), Four Gospels (21*r*–325*r*), with chapter lists to each Gospel, homiletic excerpts, and verses on the Evangelists

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Cod. Urbin. Gr. 2
PROVENANCE: acquired by Federigo da Montefeltro before 1474; entered the Vatican Library in 1657
SELECTED REFERENCES: Stornajolo 1895, pp.3–8; Stornajolo 1910, pp.19–22, figs 83–91, 93; Fachechi 2002, pp.103–12

The portraits of John II Komnenos (1118–43) and his son Alexios Komnenos (*c.*1122–42) show that this small, elegant Gospel-book was commissioned by – or for – the emperors, possibly by John himself for his son. Its style, iconography, ornament and colours link it to a group of at least a dozen illuminated books which are often called the Kokkinobaphos group since it included two copies of the Marian sermons of James Kokkinobaphos (see also cat.204). Several manuscripts in the group are argued as imperial productions, but this manuscript is the only one to have ruler portraits. Its modest scale, unpretentious content and traditional programme of paired feast icons and Evangelist portraits contrast with the big liturgical manuscripts commissioned by earlier emperors, and this has led scholars to disparage the Komnenian court scriptorium. In fact, the Kokkinobaphos group does not represent a scriptorium: united only in its style, it must reflect a prominent painter or shop working on varied commissions with different master scribes. This book presents the rulers less as instigators than as consumers of contemporary bibliophile fashion, which favoured the personal New Testament devotional book, luxuriant vinescroll ornament and animal initials, genre details and allegorical personifications.

The book was surely produced between about 1122 and 1142, when both emperors were alive, probably near the date of 1128 given on folio 2*r*. Some later verses about Alexios I Komnenos must have been introduced when the book was still in a Greek-speaking environment, but the lines in a fourteenth-century Latin hand on folio 1, and the need on the part of the scribe who gave the date of 1128 to explain the Byzantine dating system, suggest that it was then among Latins, if not in the West. Federico da Montefeltro's monogram as count indicates that he had acquired the book before he became Duke of Urbino in 1474.

ANNEMARIE WEYL CARR

60

Psalter, folio 1*v*

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Manuscript on parchment, 37 × 26.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Cod. Par. Gr. 139
PROVENANCE: acquired in Istanbul by Jean Hurault de Boistaillé, Henri II of France's envoy to the Sultan, in 1557 or shortly thereafter; Bibliothèque royale, Paris, 1622
SELECTED REFERENCES: Montfaucon 1708, pp.11–13; Bordier 1883, pp.108–14; Buchthal 1938; Weitzmann 1939; Grabar 1955, pp.168–77; Paris 1958, no.10; Cutler 1984c, pp.63–71, 200–5; Lowden 1988; Paris 1992, no.261, pp.350–1; New York 1997, no.163

This book with the Psalms and Odes was written and illuminated in Constantinople in about the middle of the tenth century. The text of the psalms, written in calligraphic minuscule letters, is surrounded by extracts from patristic commentaries relating to the verses presented in the centre of the page. The manuscript's fame rests on the fourteen full-page miniatures placed (with one exception) at the beginning and end of the manuscript. These illuminations are presented as separate paintings, each with a frame decorated with geometric or plant patterns or gilded; they fall into two clearly distinct iconographic groups. The seven first miniature paintings, at the beginning of the psalter, plus an eighth located at the beginning of Psalm 50, form a cycle devoted to the life of David, the presumed author of the psalms. The six last miniatures illustrate the odes or canticles of the Old and New Testaments to be found at the end of all Byzantine psalters. The miniatures have been executed by various different artists and do not all achieve the same high artistic quality, but they nevertheless constitute a coherent group designed expressly for this psalter.

The images all display a strong Classical influence. This is manifested particularly in the use of a pictorial style reminiscent of Roman fresco technique, and in the omnipresence of personifications such as the Mount of Bethlehem and Melody next to David playing the harp in the first miniature, or Night and Aurora next to Isaiah in prayer in the miniature introducing the fifth ode. To these Classical references are added a series of references to contemporary imperial symbolism, for example the elements of palace architecture in the background and even more the ceremonial garments worn by David in several miniatures and by King Hezekiah in the last miniature of the psalter; these make clear reference to the emperor of Constantinople and his court. Glorifying the emperor as it does through the figure of David and that of Hezekiah, this opulent volume should perhaps be linked with the emperor ruling Constantinople in the middle of the tenth century, Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (945–959).

CHRISTIAN FÖRSTEL

61

Lectionary with cruciform text, folio 195*v*–196*r*

Constantinople, twelfth century
Parchment, 38.5 × 29 cm

The British Library, London, Add. Ms. 39603
PROVENANCE: found in 1837 by Robert Curzon in the Monastery of Xenophon on Mount Athos, where he was told it used to be kept at the nearby Pantokrator monastery; Curzon purchased the book; it was donated to the British Library in 1917
SELECTED REFERENCES: Anderson 1992, especially pp.76–80; London 2007, p.200

This large book is a lectionary and contains in its 196 folios the Gospel readings of the Byzantine liturgy arranged in order of the calendar of the Church year, beginning with Easter Sunday and ending with the Lenten vigils. What is special is that it is one of only four manuscripts in which the text is written in the shape of the cross, instantly conveying visually its central Christian significance. It has no figural miniatures, but each reading begins with an ornate initial, and decorative elements ornament the pages. The writing seems to be the work of just a single scribe, using brown ink for the text and carmine for the ekphonic notations (to help the reader to chant the words).

No expense was spared to set out the text over many pages of parchment, and this may suggest that the production of such a special liturgical book was the endeavour of the patriarchate or imperial palace at Constantinople. A note written on folio 1 records the opinion of a bishop of Heraklia named Methodios (probably in the second half of the eighteenth century) that the writing was actually done by a twelfth-century emperor – either Alexios Komnenos or Manuel Komnenos.

ROBIN CORMACK

62

Painted and gilded glass bowl

Constantinople, tenth century
Glass, dark violet in colour, gilded and painted, silver gilt and glass cabochons, height 17 cm; diameter 17 cm; total breadth 33 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 83
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pasini 1886, no. 100, p. 101; Molinier 1888, pp. 58–60; no. 66, p. 91; Gallo 1967, V. no. 3, p. 278; Philippe 1970, pp. 100–22; Hahnloser 1971, no. 83, pp. 77–8 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 20, pp. 181–3 (K. Reynolds Brown); Whitehouse and Pilosi 2001

This small hemispherical bowl with its flared edge, made of very dark, almost black, violet-coloured glass, is a piece of exceptional workmanship. The delicate decoration of gilded arabesques covers the whole external surface and contains seven mythological figures; the scenes appear between medallions adorned with polychrome rosettes and fourteen profile heads, each in its own small tondo. The larger figures look like Classical figures, but it is not easy to identify them as they have no inscriptions and may be purposely enigmatic, like those on the Veroli Casket (cat. 66). The smaller profile heads resemble cameos but are equally enigmatic.

The mount in silver-gilt recalls the mount of the Sisinnios Chalice, also in the Treasury of St Mark's; it consists of two handles, slightly unevenly attached, which present a four-petalled flower in the upper volute and a blue glass cabochon in the centre.

The idea that the painted glass bowl is Classical and the mount medieval is no longer maintained; both the bowl and the mount seem to be have been made in Constantinople and to date from the tenth century. The pseudo-Kufic inscriptions inside the rim and on the outside of the base are, it seems, ornamental. The combination of Classical imagery, Byzantine ornament and imitation of Arabic writings suggests that the bowl belongs to the sophisticated atmosphere of the Byzantine court at the time of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59).

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

63

Fragment of the lower part of a dalmatic

Constantinople, eleventh century
Figured samite 4 lats, twill weave 2 lie 1; silk; white linen sewing thread, 51.3 × 107.5 cm

Musée d'histoire, Sion (propriété du chapitre cathédrale de Sion)
SELECT REFERENCES: Schmedding 1978, pp. 230–2, Carcassonne 1999, no. 26, p. 104

The characteristic cut of this silk fragment indicates that it is the lower part of a priestly garment, probably a dalmatic (a long wide-sleeved tunic used in the liturgy). Now in the Church of Valère, Sion, Switzerland, where it forms part of an impressive collection of medieval fabrics used to wrap relics, it comes from Sion Cathedral and was discovered in 1923; it was restored in 1973.

The bold design with large medallions might seem unsuitable for use as a garment. However, manuscript illuminations show that such patterns were used, as a secular example, the representation of one of the courtiers of Emperor Nikephoros III Botaniates, *c.*1071–81 (*Homélies de Jean Chrysostome*, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, cod. Coislin 79, fol. 2r), demonstrates.

The large medallions contain twisted griffins. As in the art of Sassanid Persia, every joint of each of these fantastic animals is marked with a rosette or some other ornament. Other circular patterns decorate the space above the hindquarters of the griffins, as well as the upper part of the medallion.

The use of purple might suggest that this was a diplomatic gift (Muthesius 1995, pp. 165–72), but it is just as likely that it was booty from the Fourth Crusade. Luxurious silk fabrics intended for court or diplomatic use were woven either in official workshops in Constantinople or in strictly controlled private workshops.

The colour scheme of the silk is dominated by the strong violet hue of the purple dye, which stands out against the black background. The white weft thread is used only to emphasise the stylised shape of the griffins' eyes. Very few fabrics in purple have survived from Byzantium, which gives added importance to this piece.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

64

The Virgin's Grotto

Constantinople-Venice: temple, fourth–fifth century (?); diadem, ninth–tenth century; statuette, thirteenth century

Rock crystal, silver gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, precious stones, pearls, total height 20 cm; diadem diameter 13 cm; height 3.5 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 92
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pasini 1886, no. 111, p. 68; Molinier 1888, p. 62; no. 100, pp. 95–6; Gallo 1967, III, no. 18, p. 278; Hahnloser 1971, no. 92, pp. 81–2 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 8, pp. 117–23 (D. Alcouffe and M.E. Frazer); Ravenna 2001, pp. 221–2 (M. Galoppo)

The object first mentioned as the 'Grotta della Vergine' (The Virgin's Grotto) by Antonio Pasini in 1886 is composed of three parts dating from different periods: the temple in rock crystal is ascribed with reasonable conviction to the Late Antique period, the diadem of Emperor Leo VI in silver-gilt is Byzantine and belongs to the ninth–tenth century, and the statuette of the Virgin in silver-gilt was probably made in Venice in the thirteenth century when the various pieces where assembled. The work can be identified as the *ecclesiolam unam de cristallo furnitam argento deaurato* listed in the inventory of 1325.

The votive diadem of Leo VI (886–912) is a fine example of Byzantine enamelling. The fascia in silver-gilt formerly contained, between two rows of pellets, fourteen medallions made of cloisonné enamel edged with pearls and alternating with triangular cabochons of garnet. The seven surviving medallions portray the emperor, identified by scholars as Leo VI, flanked on his left by St Paul and St Andrew and on his right by St Mark, St Bartholomew, St Luke and St James. The missing enamels are thought to have presented the image of Christ opposite that of the emperor, flanked by the six Apostles to total the canonical number twelve. Contrary to what some scholars have suggested, the presence of the emperor makes it unlikely that the coronet could have originally been the upper rim of a goblet. It is now considered that the peacocks attached to the upper edge, two of which remain out of the original three, with their tails decorated with bright blue paste gems and with a ring on their backs, prove that formerly the diadem and also possibly later the whole grotto were to be hung up. In addition, the small rings on the birds' beaks and on the lower rim of the coronet are thought to have been intended to hang strings of pearls and precious stones in order to increase the devotional impact of the piece.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

65

Casket

Byzantium, tenth–eleventh centuries, with later alterations
Bone on a wooden core, with brass clasps, 16.1 × 24 × 15.6 cm

Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, O. Dut. 1273
PROVENANCE: in the collection of Germeau, sold in 1868; then that of A. and F. Duthuit until 1898
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 20; Paris 1992, no. 171 (J. Durand) with earlier bibliography

Carved in bone on a wooden core, this box appears to be a cheaper imitation of more luxury ivory versions such as the Veroli Casket (cat. 66). The twelve small rectangular plaques on the sides and centre of the lid show a variety of figures, some of whom are identifiable: those on the front include two versions of Heracles fighting a lion, with between them a seated warrior (now partially hidden by the lock) whose pose resembles that of Joshua (compare Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 10). Others are more generic: a variety of hunters and fighters, a centaur, and griffins attacking animals (the one on the right end is a modern copy), and the slightly incongruous inclusion of a man making an offering with covered hands. A further nineteen griffins are shown, either in pairs or attacking deer, around the angled sides of the lid. The plaques are surrounded by rosette strips, a feature common to all Byzantine boxes of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Traces of gilding and paint suggest that the original appearance of the box would have been greatly embellished with colour. The functions of these boxes cannot be discerned from their decoration, but they were presumably made to house small precious objects in a domestic setting.

It is possible to find precedents for each individual image on other boxes, which suggests that such boxes were mass-produced by combining plaques from stock collections. However, the particularly eclectic mixture of Old Testament, mythological and generic scenes on this example is puzzling. The range, as well as variations in the carving of the plaques, has led to suggestions that the box is a montage of plaques from different sources, combined either in the Middle Ages, possibly in South Italy, or in the nineteenth century to produce one complete example.

ANTONY EASTMOND

66

The Veroli Casket

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Ivory and bone on wood core, metal hardware, 11.2 × 40.5 × 16 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 216-1885
PROVENANCE: purchased from the Cathedral of Veroli by John Webb in 1861; sold by him to the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, in 1865 for £420
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1930, no. 21; Weitzmann 1951, pp. 169–77; Edinburgh 1958, no. 122; Beckwith 1960; Simon 1964; Cutler 1984–85; Cutler 1994, pp. 56–63, 117, 150–1, 224, 240–3, figs 61, 128; New York 1997, no. 153 (A. Cutler); Hanson 1999; London 2006B, no. 103 (A. Eastmond); Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp. 161–6

The Veroli Casket allows us to view an aspect of the Byzantine world of which little material evidence now survives: the private sphere of élite entertainment and luxury, a world filled with humour, satire and eroticism, balanced by erudition and virtuosity. It is perhaps the finest ivory carving of the tenth century, albeit combined rather more crudely with bone rosette strips as framing elements. The seven ivory plaques with figural carving that adorn the sides and lid of this box display an apparently eclectic mixture of mythological imagery: on the left of the lid the rape of Europa is placed next to stone-throwing youths; on the front Asklepios and Hygieia are shown viewing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, to which they have no link. Other figures, such as the woman having a thorn removed from her foot by an *eros* on the front left plaque are impossible to identify with certainty. The most common theme is that of Dionysiac revelry, evident in dancing maenads on the lid, the naked erotes who cavort on most of the plaques and the overt eroticism on the back. On that side too, scenes are echoed and parodied: the rapes of Europa and Ganymede can both be seen re-enacted by erotes.

No attempt to find a common theme or source for the images has yet been successful; rather the box appears to represent a playful tenth-century intermingling of deliberately ambiguous myths for viewers to disentangle. The juxtaposition of solemn tragedy and erotic comedy on the box means that the Classical past is, like the carving of the ivory itself, heavily undercut. Henry and Eunice Maguire have suggested that the inclusion of humour and absence of identifying inscriptions were a means of 'disarming' the pagan subject-matter for its Christian audience (Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, p. 162). Elements in the images may also have sought to provide a Classical sanction for the irreverent, occasionally scatological, side of court life that is sometimes commented on in chronicles: the maenads on the lid, for example, wear the pointed hats of theatrical mimes, so linking the contemporary world with that of the mythical past.

ANTONY EASTMOND

67

Carved box with emperors riding and hunting

Tenth or eleventh century
Carved and stained ivory, said to show traces of gilding, with silver (replacement?) lock, hinges and corner reinforcements, 13.4 × 26.4 × 13 cm

Trésor de la Cathédrale de Troyes
PROVENANCE: said to be from Constantinople; brought after the 1204 Sack of Constantinople to Troyes by Jean Langlois, chaplain to the Bishop of Troyes, Cramier de Traisnel
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 1997, no. 141, pp. 204–7 (H. Maguire); Athens 2001, no. 46, pp. 118–21 (Y. Vitaliotis)

This solid ivory box with no wooden core represents, in its material, extraordinary luxury, and in its images imperial power. Like the equestrian statue of Justinian on a column at the centre of Constantinople, the riders on the box enact both ceremonial allegory and heroic narrative. On the lid, in their imperial regalia, they receive territorial power from the timeless and seasonless personification of a city who offers an emperor a crown. On the front, the riders are lion-hunters galloping without stirrups past winter's leafless branches. A similar branch tops the end panels, suggesting a change of season or reign; a phoenix preens itself below, among burgeoning leafy stems, as a sign of endless renewal. All the equestrian figures have general parallels in Byzantine silks; this bird resembles representations of the propitious *fenghuang* bird in Chinese gold or silver works of art.

The stallions on the lid, like Justinian's well-built horse in Constantinople, stand with three legs still and long, straight tails. But on the front, the hunters' cloaks stream out like their horses' knotted tails. The hunters, probably father and son, are not, as they appear to be, back to back; they turn fully to face one another as the archer, wearing a plumed *toupha* helmet, again like Justinian, rescues his sword-bearing companion with a variation of the half-turned 'Parthian shot'. The last panel, on the back, is also active and temporal: in autumn, with acorns ripe on the tree, a boar-hunter, probably the younger emperor proving his valour, tramples his fallen cloak as he thrusts his spear.

Both riding and walking, on the lid and the front, one hunter wears an unusual cap-like helmet with the cuirass, and boots without greaves or spurs. On the lid the emperors' cloaks are pulled to a shoulder fibula. Their crowns and the stirrups under their feet are post-Justinianic; amuletic crescent-shaped pendants caparison their horses. Yet the spectators added to this scene on the lid straddle the high defensive wall in humorous mimicry of the splendid but passive imperial riders.

EUNICE DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE

68

Ivory with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ

Constantinople, 945
Ivory, 18.6 × 9.5 × 0.7 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv. II-162
PROVENANCE: from Smirna, Armenia; Uvarov Collection of Count A.S. Uvarov, Moscow, 1879–81; State Historical Museum, Moscow, from 1924; State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, from 1933
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 35, table XIV, n. 15; Grabar 1936, p. 2; Edinburgh 1958, no. 65, p. 32; Bank 1966, nos 124–5; Moscow 1977, vol. 2, no. 580, pp. 96–9; Mishakova 1978; Bank 1985, no. 122; New York 1997, no. 140, pp. 203–4; Athens 2001, no. 15, pp. 84–5, fig. on p. 85

The inscriptions read: around Christ's head: IC XC (Jesus Christ); above the emperor: KΩNCTANTINOC EN Θ(E)Ω / AYTO KPA / TΩP (Constantine Emperor in God); beneath his left arm: BACIΛEYC PΩMAIΩN (Emperor of the Romans). The dating of the piece is based on style and the inscriptions, in which Constantine is called 'emperor' of the Romans. Both suggest that the ivory was executed at Constantinople during the short period between 27 January 945, when Constantine VII became sole ruler, and 6 April, when his son Romanos became co-ruler until Constantine's death in 959. Grabar defined this scene as 'the emperor's investiture by Christ' (Grabar 1936, p. 72). The original function of this ivory is unknown; it may have been a commemorative gift, like the earlier consular diptychs or perhaps the central decorative element on a manuscript.

The naturalistic proportions of the figures and the detailed carving of the relief of the ivory are particularly noteworthy. The emperor is depicted without a halo, but with the imperial attributes of the jewelled stole (*loros*) and gem-studded crown. There was an attempt to render the emperor's appearance accurately: the specific shape of his hair and beard is found on gold coins of the

period of his reign (cat.55). Christ is notable for his ascetic austerity. The simplicity of his garments is reinforced by the delicate drapery. The two figures bear a great resemblance to each other, and both are worked in fairly high relief. Christ is depicted on the same scale as the emperor, although a number of elements elevate his figure: the pedestal and his feet are rendered from above, while the upper part of his body is rendered from below, making the figure appear remote. Constantine VII, in contrast, stands solidly on the soles of his feet. The two figures are shown together beneath a ciborium.

ELENA PILNIK

69

Comb

Constantinople, between 886 and 912
Ivory, 10.3 × 10 × 2 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, inv. no. 2006
PROVENANCE: anonymous gift, 1892
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, p.52, no.88; Arnulf 1990; Bühl and Jehle 2002; Munich 2004, no.33 (G. Bühl)

This unusual object was until recently thought to be a sceptre, but a new examination has given reasons to identify it as the grip of a solid, one-row comb (Bühl and Jehle 2002). All that remains of the teeth is a series of regular incisions along the lower edge and on the underside.

The piece is more than twice as thick as other ivory panels carved in relief that survive from the Middle Byzantine period – another indication of this object's different character and function. A further notable characteristic is the relief decoration on all surfaces. On each side a different set of three half-length figures faces the viewer beneath identical architecture. One side shows Mary, in the centre, turning towards the emperor and about to place a jewel in his crown. Contemporary texts permit this to be interpreted as symbolising the 'pearl of faith' (Arnulf 1990). On the opposite side the Apostles Peter and Paul flank the blessing Christ. The physician saints Kosmas and Damianos are depicted on the ends.

An inscription appears above the arches and in the architrave: 'Leo, the emperor, shall rejoice in thy strength, O Lord; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he exult' (text based on Septuagint Psalm xx, 2). On the other side appears: 'Through the commandments of thy disciples, guide thy servants.' On the coronation side is another inscription, in words based on Septuagint Psalm xxxxiv, 5: 'Gather all strength, go thy way in good fortune and rule, lord Leo.'

The 'Leo Basileus' mentioned here has been identified as Emperor Leo VI (886–912), which makes this carving the earliest dated Byzantine ivory to have survived from the post-iconoclastic era. Whether the comb was commissioned for a coronation ceremony or made as a luxury object for the emperor cannot be decided. One Western source mentions an ivory comb used every morning at the lever ceremony of Emperor Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118).

GUDRUN BÜHL

70

Votive plaque with Christ blessing Emperor Otto II (967–983) and Empress Theophano (982–83)

Ivory, traces of red polychromy, 18.5 × 10.6 cm

Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris, inv. no. Cl.392
PROVENANCE: belonged to the collection of A. Sommerard, acquired by the State, 1843
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kalavrezou 1977, pp.307–20; Paris 1992, pp.247–9; Cutler 1995B, pp.605–14; Davids 1995; New York 1997, no.337, pp.499–501

Inscribed: in Greek on either side of Christ's head IC XC (Jesus Christ); in Latin and Greek above the emperor OTTO IMP[ERATOR] R[O]MAN[ORUM] A[ΥΓΟΥCΤΟ]C (Otto, Emperor of the Romans, Augustus); in Greek and Latin above the head of the empress ΘΕΟΦΑΝΩ IMP[ERATRIX] A[ΥΓΟΥCΤΟ]C (Theophano, Empress, Augustus); in Greek next to the body of Christ, Κ[ΥΡΙ]Ε ΒΟΗΘ[Ε]Ι Τ[Ω] C[Ω] ΔΟΥΛ[Ω] ΙΩ[ΑΝΝΗ] [ΜΟΝΑ?]ΧΩ ΑΜΕΜ (Lord, protect (or help) your servant, the monk (?) John, Amen)

The ivory depicts Christ, in the centre of the scene, blessing simultaneously the German emperor Otto II and his wife, Theophano. This iconography is derived from coronation and wedding imagery. Both Otto and Theophano wear versions of Byzantine imperial dress and their crowns echo Byzantine crowns. However, they are incomplete versions: Otto, for example, wears a mantle rather than the imperial *loros* and holds an odd heart-shaped object, while Theophano clasps a book. Beneath the emperor's feet crouches a bearded male figure, one hand wrapped round Christ's footstool, most probably the donor of the plaque, John.

Otto married the Byzantine princess Theophano, probably a niece of Emperor John II Tzimiskes, in 972. The inscription, however, allows the panel to be dated precisely between the first use of the title *imperator romanum* in 982 and Otto's death in 983. The ivory is seen as representing both Western and Byzantine imperial claims through the use of Latin and Greek titles. John is believed to be John Philagathos of Calabria, Otto's Chancellor in Italy and tutor to his son, and later the antipope John XVI.

The ivory plausibly derives from a Byzantine model: another ivory in the Bibliothèque nationale, depicting Emperor Romanos and his empress Eudokia (there is debate over whether this is Romanos II or Romanos IV), offers a close iconographic parallel. However, the unusual details in this plaque – the 'imperial' dress, the attributes of the figures, allied to the combination of baldachino and curtains above Christ, and the mixture of Latin and not wholly accurate Greek in the inscriptions – make it likely that this was a Western rather than a Byzantine production. If the donor John was indeed John Philagathos, then a South Italian origin is indicated.

This plaque may have served as a book cover; this too would be unusual in a Byzantine context.

LIZ JAMES

71

Icon with Virgin and Child

Second half of tenth century
Ivory, 22.4 × 14.2 × 1.1 cm

Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, O.Dut. 01272
SELECTED REFERENCES: Milliken 1926; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.82, pl. XXXIII; Koenen 1998

This large ivory depicts the Enthroned Virgin with the Christ Child on her lap. The Virgin is represented under a baldachin flanked by two roundels with the busts of Peter and Paul at the level of her head. None of the figures have inscriptions to identify them, an unusual feature for a Byzantine ivory. The baldachin is of the type found in ivories of the tenth century with some undercutting and with round perforations to suggest a delicate and lightweight structure. It is supported by twisted thin columns with capitals in the form of heads. This image of the Virgin presenting the Christ Child to the world is more commonly seen in the conch of church apses. Christ is blessing and the Virgin rests her left hand on his shoulder while, with her right, she touches his foot. She is seated on a large pillow and an elaborately carved throne, studded with pearls and jewels.

The most unusual feature of the image is the high, arched, shell-like canopy above the throne, which frames the Virgin. Large carved stars decorate its surface. The peculiar form of the throne and the stars can be seen as a kind of mandorla of light or starry cloud, an attempt to represent physically the symbolic qualities of the Virgin. Light and stellar comparisons are plentiful in the hymns written for her (Eustathiades 1930). She is referred to as the annunciating light, the gate of light, and the rising light of the east (Ledit 1976, p.101). The icon is a visual expression of literary language and imagery.

This ivory is very similar to one now in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.79; Athens 2000, no.19 [I. Kalavrezou]). The Paris version has a rougher carving style than the Cleveland piece and a close comparison of the two suggests that the Paris piece is probably a derivative of the Cleveland ivory, possibly a Western copy made in the Middle Ages (Koenen 1998, pp.210–12).

IOLI KALAVREZOU

72

Ivory panel with the Theotokos Hodegetria

Constantinople, tenth century
Ivory, 25.7 × 13.3 × 1.4 cm

Museum Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, ABM b.i. 751
PROVENANCE: from the collection of A. I. Schaepman, Archbishop of Utrecht (1868–82); formerly in a church in Rotterdam
SELECTED REFERENCES: Paris 1931, no.114; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.46; Antwerp 1948, no.227; Schnitzler 1949, no.12/34; Antwerp 1954, no.267; Essen 1956, no.409; Edinburgh 1958, no.102; Athens 1964, no.63; Brussels 1982, no.Iv.10; Cologne 1985, no.G.11 (H. M. L. Defoer); Hildesheim 1993, pp.54–6, no.II-18 (A. Effenberger); Cutler 1994, pp.18, 94, 109–14, 237–38; New York 1997, no.86 (O. Z. Pevny); Athens 2000, no.57 (B. Pitarakis); Cutler and North 2003, p.3, fig.2; Pentcheva 2006, p.113, fig.80

Almost perfectly preserved, this elegant panel was originally the central portion of an ivory triptych. The Mother of God holds the Christ Child in her left hand and gestures to him with her right. By doing so she shows that the route to human salvation lies through Christ (hence the name of this iconographical pose: the Hodegetria 'she who shows the way'). The elegant pose of the Virgin, her slightly elongated proportions, carefully delineated folds and steady, but distant gaze combine to create a calmly reflective image. In places, such as the Virgin's left sleeve and Christ's left shoulder, the ivory has been cut back to give a greater sense of volume and depth within the confines of this shallow piece of ivory. The figures are set off against the exquisitely smooth, translucent background surface of the ivory.

The apparent simplicity of the plaque belies its theological complexity. The icon can be read on many levels. It is an image of motherly love; a representation of the incarnation of God as man; a symbol of Christ's destiny to offer himself as a sacrifice; and ultimately it reminds viewers of the redemptive power of his resurrection. Byzantine viewers would have been able to meditate on all these themes as they contemplated the image.

The ivory is associated with four other similar images (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 47–9), but this is the finest. It is also stylistically very close to an ivory showing Emperor Romanos and Empress Eudokia, now generally thought to be Romanos II (959–63) (Cutler 1995B, arguing against Kalavrezou 1977). The wings that would have framed this central image are lost.

ANTONY EASTMOND

73

Ivory with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, *c.*950–1000
Ivory, 33.5 × 11.8 cm

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, M.13-1904
PROVENANCE: from the nineteenth-century cover of an Ottonian lectionary manuscript; MS 30 in the collection of Frank McClean, who bequeathed it to the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1904; before that in the Barrois Collection, Ashburnham
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1912B, no.37; London 1923, no.61; Longhurst 1924; Longhurst 1927, p.40; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.148; Edinburgh 1958, no.65; Cutler 1994, pp.163–5; London 1994, no.154 (D. Buckton); New York 1997, no.83A (S. Taft)

Christ appears on this ivory plaque as the Pantokrator, the Ruler of All. The half-length figure stares out at the viewer, his left hand holding the Gospels, his right making a gesture of blessing. Rather than a cross nimbus, only a gemmed cross appears behind his head to denote both his divinity and his sacrifice for humankind. The image of divine authority in the ivory would have gained additional meanings and resonances for viewers who would have been familiar with the iconography from its other appearances, most notably in the domes over the centre of Byzantine churches in this period. Here Christ was depicted as the culmination of a whole decorative programme that ascended from the human to the divine, and encapsulated the Byzantines' view of the order of the cosmos. The popularity of the image after iconoclasm was reinforced by a legend recounted in the *Vita* of St Stephen the Younger. This ninth-century anti-iconoclast text claimed that the first image to have been destroyed by the iconoclasts (and also the first to be set up again in 787 and then again in 843, after each of the periods of iconoclasm) was a half-length figure of Christ set up on the Chalke gate, the monumental entrance to the Great Palace of the Byzantine emperors in Constantinople (Auzépy 1990).

The carving of this ivory is very close to two others with the same image (in the Louvre, Paris, and the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 146–7), and Anthony Cutler has convincingly argued that they were all executed by one artist (Cutler 1994, pp.163–5). This suggests both the popularity of this iconography, and the ability of individual artists to reproduce their own work accurately to suit that market. The ivory was probably originally the centre of a triptych (presumably accompanied by intercessory images of the Virgin and John the Baptist), but the sides were later trimmed down when it was reused for a manuscript cover.

ANTONY EASTMOND

74

Ivory panel with SS. Andrew and Peter

Constantinople, mid-tenth century or 1060s
Ivory, 24.6 × 13.5 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstkammer (8136)
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, vol.2, no.44, p.18; Cutler 1994, pp.125, 132; New York 1997, no.89, pp.141–2

This ivory plaque depicts the Apostles Andrew and Peter, holding scrolls in their left hands and blessing with their right. Their names are incised: Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΑΝΔΡΕΑC, Ο ΑΓΙΟC ΠΕΤΡΟC. According to Matthew IV, 18 Andrew and Peter were brothers. They fill almost the whole height of the plaque. They are imposing as figures, although they display a softness of form and mannered stances, emphasised by the multiple folds of their garments, as if softly pressed against their bodies. This plaque has a companion piece of the same dimensions, composition and style depicting the Apostles St John the Theologian and St Paul, now in Venice. A third plaque with iconographic and stylistic details very close to the two Apostle plaques represents Christ enthroned (formerly in the Hirsh collection). Together these pieces seem to be part of a large Deisis composition (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.44), like the triptychs from the Vatican and Paris (cats 76 and 77).

The Vienna and Venice plaque have a two-line epigram in high relief in dodecasyllabic verse: Vienna:

ΩC ΑΥΤΑΔΕΛΦΟΙ ΜΥCΤΟΛΕΚΤΑΙ ΤΩΝ ΑΝΩ
ΝΕΜΟΙΤΕ ΛΥΤΡΟΝ ΔΕCΠΟΤΗ
ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΩ

(As brothers knowledgeable of the divine mysteries of the world above, may you give relief to the Emperor Constantine; or: As brotherly judges of the divine mysteries of the world above, may you distribute relief to the Emperor Constantine).

The inscription on the Venice ivory repeats the name of the Emperor Constantine, but adds:

CΚΕΥΟC ΘΕΟΥΡΓΟΝ CΥΛΛΑΛΕΙ ΤΩΙ
ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΙ
ΒΛΑΒΗC CΚΕΠΕCΘΑΙ ΔΕCΠΟΤΗΝ
ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΝ

(The instrument of God [Paul] speaks together with the chaste [John the Theologian] so that the Emperor Constantine be protected from harm.)

The one is a prayer, the other a description of the intervention of the Apostles to Christ so that the emperor named Constantine does not suffer. The use of the words ΒΛΑΒΗ and ΛΥΤΡΟΝ implies Constantine was ill. Only one emperor Constantine was severely sick in the eleventh century and that was Constantine X Doukas (1059–67) who fell terminally ill in 1066, knew of his imminent death to the point where he withdrew and entrusted all his duties to his wife Eudokia Makrembolitissa (Psellos *Chron.* 1928, II.151; Kalavrezou 1977, pp.307–25). A date for the plaque during Constantine's reign makes good historical as well as stylistic sense.

The ivory Deisis therefore has a poignant meaning – the Apostles are asked to intercede with Christ for his recovery. The work could have been commissioned by Constantine himself as a kind of ex voto or by someone on his behalf (New York 1997, no.90, pp.143–4). Apostles are very appropriate saints to speak on the emperor's behalf. Except for the Virgin and John the Baptist, the imperial intercessors are the Apostles. Reconstructing this panel as part of a Deisis gives the ivory a function as one part of an imperial prayer.

IOLI KALAVREZOU

75

Ivory panel with St John the Theologian and St Paul

Constantinople, mid-tenth century or 1060s
Ivory, 24.9 × 13.4 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Patrimonio Storico Artistico e Etnoantropologico e per il Polo Museale della Città di Venezia e per il Comuni della Gronda Laguna, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Venice, inv. 19
SELECTED REFERENCES: Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no.43; Brussels 1982, no.Iv.13; Cutler 1994, p.48, figs 48–9; New York 1997, no.89B (I. Kalavrezou)

St John the Theologian and St Paul stand, holding their writings in bejewelled books, on a dais decorated with an elaborate arcade along the front (this is deeply carved to give an enhanced

sense of volume to the plaque). Their slightly elongated figures and impressively carved drapery give both a sense of monumentality. The inscription that has been painstakingly carved in relief above their heads (rather than merely incised into the ivory like their names, which appear around their haloes) makes clear their interaction and their purpose: ΚΕΥΟC ΘΕΟΥΓΓΟΝ CΥΛΛΑΛΕΙ ΤΩΙ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΙ ΒΛΑΒΗC ΣΚΕΠΕCΘΑΙ ΔΕCΠΟΤΗΝ ΚΩΝCΤΑΝΤΙΝΟΝ (The instrument of God [St Paul] speaks together with the chaste man [St John] in order that the Emperor Constantine be protected from harm). Kalavrezou (in New York 1997, pp. 141–4) has noted that plaque was once part of a set, of which two other plaques survive: one shows SS. Andrew and Peter paired in an identical format (and with a similar inscription wishing for relief for an emperor Constantine), the other portraying Christ enthroned (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 44, 54). They were presumably once mounted with Christ in the centre to act as a composite intercessory object.

Although the plaque might be thought to refer to a particular illness of the emperor Constantine, the ivory itself is not unique. An almost identical version survives in Dresden, with the same inscription (New York 1997, no. 90). This suggests that these ivories were produced more widely for members of the imperial family or court, and were to remind their viewers of the need to pray for the emperor at all times.

The date of the plaque and identity of the emperor Constantine are contested, but it is most likely to refer to Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59). The carving of the ivory is similar to that on a triptych in the Palazzo Venezia in Rome, which also has an inscription invoking protection for the health of an emperor, generally agreed to be Constantine VII (Oikonomides 1995; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 31). I prefer this dating.

ANTONY EASTMOND

76

Triptych with Deisis and Saints

Constantinople, *c.* 1000
Ivory with traces of gilt, 25.2 × 33 × 2.9 cm (open)

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, *inv.* no. 62441
PROVENANCE: acquired by Pope Benedict XIV from a private collection
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gori 1759, III, pp. 217–32, pls XXIV–XXXV; New York 1997, no. 79, pp. 131–2 (I. Kalavrezou); Rimini 2007, no. 5, pp. 94–5 (C. Pantanella)

This triptych has three carved panels, which were originally gilded; the central panel equals the sum of the other two panels in size and is attached to them by hinges. The internal face of the central panel and the corresponding faces of the two side panels are decorated in relief with figures of saints, aligned in a horizontal band and separated by busts in medallion-shaped frames. The scene of Deisis in the upper half, echoing the ceremonial of the imperial court (Christ with the Book, his hand raised in blessing, enthroned between the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist, whose arms are raised in a gesture of intercession), is paired with the Apostles in the lower half, who can be identified by their names on the various figures (James, John, Peter, Paul and Andrew); in the medallions with the busts can be seen Philip, Luke, Mark, Matthew and Thomas.

The side wings show the military saints in the upper part (St Theodore Tiro and St Eustathios in the left-hand wing, and St Theodore Stratelates and St George in the right); they are accompanied by a row in the lower part which comprises a combination of local martyrs and miracle workers (St Arator and St Prokopios in the left-hand wing, St Demetrios and St Eustratius in the right), interspersed with eastern saints (St Mercurios and St Stephen in the left-hand medallions, St Panteleimon and St Menas in the right).

Similarly, on the external face of the two doors, to correspond with the Fathers of the Church in the upper part (St Basil and St Gregory of Nazianzos on the left; St John Chrysostom and St Clement of Ankyra on the right), a series of martyrs and bishops occupy the lower band (St Gregory Thaumatourgos and St Severian on the left; St Agathon and St Nicholas of Myra on the right), producing a kind of 'illustrated litany' hierarchically structured around the figure of Christ. The half-length figures in the medallions (St Kosmas and St Damianos on the left; St Phokas and St Blasios on the right) also conform to this logical transcendental progression: from the bishops and patriarchs of militant Orthodoxy, visible on the icon when closed, the spectator is led towards the liturgical action within, along a way of doctrinal salvation mediated by the Church and its teachings.

The style and dimensions of the triptych assign it to the category of portable icons; it can be compared to two other celebrated triptychs, that in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome, and that in the Louvre, Paris; with these it forms the so-called 'Romanos-Group'. The triptych in the Palazzo Venezia bears an inscription dating from the reign of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (sole rule 945–59), but the date of the three pieces, based on stylistic considerations, may span about one hundred years, from the mid-tenth century for the triptych in Palazzo Venezia, to the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries for the Vatican piece, to the middle of the eleventh century for the triptych in Paris.

GUIDO CORNINI

77

The 'Harbaville' triptych with Deisis and saints

Constantinople, mid-tenth century
Elephant ivory, with traces of gilding and red paint (not original), 24 (max.) × 14.3 (the centre) and 28 cm (open)

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 3247
PROVENANCE: acquired in the early nineteenth century by M. Beugny de Pomeras, Arras; later in the collection of L.-F. Harbaville (1791–1866) and his heirs in Arras; acquired by the museum in 1891
SELECTED REFERENCES: De Linas 1885; Schlumberger 1891, pp. 294–306; Molinier 1896, no. 12 (with bibliography); Peirce and Tyler 1927, pp. 1–7; Paris 1931, no. 76; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 33 (with bibliography); Kantorowicz 1942, pp. 70–2; Edinburgh 1958, no. 75; Paris 1958, no. 149; Beckwith 1959, pp. 24–5; Athens 1964, no. 70; Kalavrezou 1977; Coche de La Ferté 1981, pl. 143, docs 528–9; Brussels 1982, IV. 8; Cutler 1991, pp. 652–4; Paris 1992, no. 148; Cutler 1994, pp. 135, 149, 211, 221, 244, 249, figs 152–3, 170, 227; New York 1997, no. 80; Connor 1998, p. 19, figs 7–8, pls IX. XI; Cutler 1998, pp. 650–5; Paris 2000B, no. 87; Parani 2001; Gaborit-Chopin 2003, pp. 86–93, no. 16 (with bibliography); Durand and Durand 2005

The 'Harbaville' triptych is one of the finest surviving Byzantine ivories. When the shutters are open the upper part of the central panel displays the traditional image of the Deisis: Christ enthroned with two half-length archangels beside him; standing at his side, the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist. Above, three small medallions contain busts of the prophets: Elijah, in the centre, Jeremiah and Isaiah, respectively in connection with the Baptist and the Virgin. Below the Deisis stand five Apostles: Peter, in the centre, James, John, Paul and Andrew. On the shutters, in three rows, from top to bottom, stand four soldier saints (Theodore Tiro, Theodore Stratelates, George, Eustathios), four half-length saints (Mercurios and Thomas the Apostle, Philip the Apostle and Panteleimon), and four standing martyr saints (Eustratios, Arethas, Demetrios, Prokopios). The backs of the shutters display, in similar rows, four Fathers of the Church (Basil, Gregory of Nazianzenos, John Chrysostom, Clement of Ankyra), four half-length saints (Phokas, Blasios, Kosmas and Damianos) and then two more bishop saints (Nicholas and Gregory Thaumatourgos) and two martyrs (Severian and James the Persian). The reverse side of the central panel has the paradisiacal vision of the victorious cross, with IC XC NI/KA (Jesus Christ is victorious), painted against a sky dotted with stars, with two bent cypress trees (symbols of immortality) inhabited by birds, one tree covered with a vine laden with bunches of grapes (an allusion to the Sacrifice and the Resurrection), the other with ivy (a symbol of immortality). At the foot of the trees, among clumps of shrubs, including olive trees and wheat, lions, a hare and some birds are shown in peaceful coexistence.

The style and high quality of the triptych aligns it with the 'Romanos Ivory' in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, and it can be ascribed to the same workshop; this ivory depicts Christ crowning an emperor by the name of Romanos, with his empress Eudoxia. Despite recent attempts to assign it to the reign of Romanos IV and to the eleventh century (Kalavrezou 1977), the figures are generally identified, since Peirce and Tyler 1926, as the young Romanos II (959–63), son of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos and Bertha, daughter of Hugh of Italy, who received the name Eudoxia in Constantinople, who married Romanos in 944 and died in 949. Hence the dating of the 'Harbaville' triptych to the mid-tenth century.

Two other triptychs in Rome of the same date (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 31 and 32) offer the Deisis with saints, with the same Apostles and minor variations in the selected saints. But only the Louvre triptych adds prophets, especially Isaiah, who announced the Messiah, and Elijah, present at the Transfiguration and about whom Christ was questioned by Peter on resurrection, placed in the vertical axis of Christ and Peter. The main theme, presented with remarkable coherence, is the salvation of humankind through the Resurrection of Christ, the Incarnation being replaced in this arrangement, and the risen Christ surrounded by saints and 'witnesses'; it is the image of salvation as promised in the Gospel to believers. The universal Church, whose perpetual prayer celebrates in the liturgy the sacrifice made by Christ and his Resurrection, affirms salvation through the 'martyrs', bishops and theologians depicted on the shutters. Finally, on the reverse side, the Cross proclaims Christ's victory over death, while the plants and animals remind us of the grace granted in Psalm CIV (CIII), based on the contemplation of creation. Salvation is replaced in the vision of the whole of creation, Christ enthroned in the Deisis appearing not only as the impartial God of Judgment, but also as Pantokrator.

JANNIC DURAND

78

Ivory triptych with Crucifixion and saints (The Borradaile Triptych)

Constantinople, tenth century
Ivory, 27.2 × 15.7 cm (central panel); 7.8 cm (left wing); 8.5 cm (right wing)

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1923, 12-5, 1
PROVENANCE: said to be from a convent in Reims; bought in 1905–06 by Charles Borradaile; bequeathed to the British Museum, London, 1923
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1923, no. 55; Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, no. 38; Kitzinger 1955, pp. 57, 108, pl. 32; Edinburgh 1958, no. 124; Athens 1964, no. 79; Kalavrezou 1977, p. 324, fig. 23; Brussels 1979, no. 51; Brussels 1982, no. IV. 9 (D. Buckton); Cutler 1994, p. 235, fig. 242; London 1994, no. 153 (A. Eastmond)

The centre of this portable triptych presents a meditation on Christ's sacrifice on the Cross. Although he is shown dead, his head slumped and his eyes closed, Christ's body is erect on the Cross, hinting at his triumph over death. The furrowed brows of the two angels and of the Virgin and St John on either side of the Cross indicate their grief, but their gestures seem designed not so much to accentuate their sorrow, but rather to present the body of Christ to the viewer as an object of contemplation.

The message of suffering is continued on the two wings, which show ten martyrs. In the top register are busts of a pair of doctor saints, Kyros and John; below them in the central register are three warrior saints in military dress, George, Theodore Stratelates and Eustathios, along with the bishop Clement of Ankyra; and in the bottom register are a further two warrior saints in court dress, Menas and Prokopios, paired with St Stephen the Protomartyr and Kyrion, leader of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste (shown here with his martyr's crown over his head: Walter 2003, pp. 107–8, 171–6). The theme of sacrifice inside the triptych is balanced by the image of victory and rebirth on the outside. The exterior of the two wings are each decorated with crosses, inscribed IC XC NIKA: 'Jesus Christ Conquers', with busts of SS. Joachim and Anna in the centres, and SS. Basil and Barbara; and James the Persian and Thekla at the terminals.

Many of the saints on the triptych are very obscure: James the Persian appears on just two other ivories, the Palazzo Venezia and Harbaville triptychs (Goldschmidt and Weitzmann 1934, nos 31, 33), and Clement of Ankyra on just one (the Harbaville again); SS. Kyros and John, and Kyrion appear on no others. These unusual choices are generally thought to reflect the personal preferences of the patrons who commissioned these ivories (as Goldschmidt and Weitzmann proposed). However, the fact that the ivories on which they do appear are closely related suggests that it may reflect a broader court promotion of the cults of these particularly unusual saints.

ANTONY EASTMOND

79

Icon with the Koimesis

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century
Steatite, partially gilt, 13 × 11.2 × 1.7 cm

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstkammer (897)
SELECTED REFERENCE: Kalavrezou 1985A

This plaque represents the best surviving example of an artistic medium first used in the tenth century for precious small private icons. The stone is steatite, soapstone, dense but soft enough to permit ease of carving. It became a popular material in addition to ivory, which could be used for small-scale relief sculpture. Its light green colour, favoured by the Byzantines, with a little gilding on surfaces such as haloes and decorative borders, made it attractive and more affordable than ivory.

This icon depicts the Koimesis of the Virgin. She is lying on a bier surrounded by the Apostles, who mourn her death. Christ stands in the centre behind the bier, holding in his arms the soul of the Virgin in the form of a baby in swaddling clothes. Unfortunately, the head has broken off, as well as the angel who was flying above in a symmetrical position to the one on the right, who is ready to receive the soul and carry it to heaven. The scene is placed under an undercut and partially pierced baldachin of a type found in ivories of the tenth century. In contrast to the ivory columns that support the baldachins in ivories, those in steatite are solid and have the unusual motif of the Heracles knot which makes its appearance in this period and is also found in the columns of the templon screen in churches (Kalavrezou 1985B). Thus the scene of the Koimesis is placed within a setting that recalls the position in churches where icons are located.

The style of this icon shows that at the beginning of steatite production carvers adhered to the carving technique used for ivory; they might even be the same craftsmen. The examples of the later centuries show us, however, that a different approach had to be taken in carving steatite as this high relief proved to be detrimental to the survival of these icons because steatite is highly fragile.

IOLI KALAVREZOU

80

Alabaster paten with Christ

Constantinople, tenth–eleventh century
Alabaster, silver-gilt, rock crystal, pearls, cloisonné enamel, 3.2 × 3.2 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, *inv.* no. 67
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pasini 1886, no. 106, p. 63; Molinier 1888, no. 94, p. 95; Gallo 1967, VI, no. 14, p. 280; Hahnloser 1971, pp. 55–7, no. 67, p. 72 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 17, pp. 169–70 (M.E. Frazer); Montevecchi and Vasco Rocca 1988, pp. 101, 124

The Treasury of St Mark's, Venice, owns a number of chalices and patens, the vessels most closely associated with the liturgy of the Eucharist, and as a group they represent some of the most outstanding examples of Byzantine workmanship; the chalices outnumber the patens but the latter are equally exceptional. This paten appears in the inventory of 1325: *Platinam unam de alabastro cum Christo ad smaldum in medio varnitam argento*; it is certainly the largest and the most exquisitely made, and this applies both to the stone and the mount. The alabaster platter, cracked from one side to the other, is finely carved in the shape of a six-petalled flower and contains at its centre a silver-gilt disk bearing the figure of Christ in cloisonné enamel, surrounded by the words used for the consecration of the wafer in the Greek rite: 'Take this and eat, this is my body.'

The silver-gilt mount consists of a circular foot connected by three strips to the richly decorated rim where, between two rows of pearls, now mostly missing, underlined by four rows of metal pellets, crystal rock cabochons are placed; the gems alternate in shape, circular and rectangular, and in background colour, red and blue.

Particularly elegant is the relationship between the disk with the figure of Christ and the inscription surrounding it, between the medallion and the plate shaped like a six-petalled flower and between the plate and its border decorated with the elegant row of cabochons.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

81

Chalice of the Patriarchs

Constantinople, tenth or early eleventh century
Sardonyx (cup); silver-gilt, gold cloisonné enamel, pearls, precious stones and rock crystal cabochons (mount), 27.3 × 18 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 40
SELECTED REFERENCES: Paoini 1886, no. 61, p. 55; Molinier 1888, no. 49, p. 89; Hahnloser 1971, no. 40, pp. 58–9 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 16, pp. 159–64 (D. Alcouffe and M.E. Frazer); Galuppo 1992–93; Venice 1996, no. 15, pp. 33–5 (A. Niero)

Known as the 'Chalice of the Patriarchs' because of its images of various patriarchs of Constantinople in cloisonné enamel work, this sumptuous chalice – both in size and in beauty of workmanship – is a major example of the court art of the period.

The hemispherical cup is carved from a block of dark red sardonyx flecked with white, the white flecks giving added luminosity to the stone. The mount in silver-gilt encircles the upper border of the cup, and bears an inscription in blue enamel which cites the words pronounced by the priest when he consecrates the holy wine during the Eucharist.

Four strips join the upper border to the base of the cup via a series of clips; the cup is embellished with eight rock-crystal cabochons, one of which has been missing for some years. The strips meet in the centre where they hold the enamelled figure of a saint. A smooth knot below the base of the cup fixes it to a truncated cone by means of a divided ring decorated with brilliantly coloured enamel work. The cone broadens towards the base and is divided into four sections with figures. Strings of pearls separate and outline the sections containing enamel work.

Four bishops are depicted in the four trapezoidal panels of the foot. Of these, two are patriarchs of Constantinople: St Gregory of Nazianzos and St John Chrysostom, for both of whom the Byzantine Church nourished a special devotion; the other two are St Ignatios of Antioch and St Theophylact of Nicomedia. Portrayed in the four smaller enamelled circles are St Demetrios, St Prokopios, St Theodore and St Akyndinos, all highly venerated in Constantinople and also represented in St Mark's Basilica, in mosaics and in the enamel work of the Pala d'Oro. The flat base of the inside of the cup bears a final cloisonné enamel depicting Christ raising his hand in blessing; in his left hand he holds the book of the Gospels, closed, in a jewel-studded binding.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

82

Book covers

Byzantium, late tenth–early eleventh centuries
Gilded silver on wood, with gold cloisonné enamels, pearls and precious stones, 29 × 21 cm

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, MS Lat. Cl. 1.100
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hahnloser 1971, no. 36 (A. Grabar); Venice 1974, no. 28 (J. Furlan); London 1984, no. 14 (M.E. Frazer; with earlier bibliography); Venice 1995, no. 34; New York 1997, no. 41 (J. Kalavrezou)

This pair of book covers is made of gilded silver, adorned with enamels. Each panel is centred on large enamels of Christ, on the front, who holds a copy of the Gospels and raises his right hand in blessing; and the Mother of God, on the back, who stands with her hands raised in prayer in the Orant pose. They are both surrounded by twelve smaller medallions of saints and prophets. All are framed by strings of pearls and precious stones. The medallions of the saints are no longer in their original locations, but it is possible to establish their original organisation as they were clearly designed as a series of pairs: the Archangels Michael and Gabriel; Anna and Joachim (the parents of Mary); Elizabeth and Zacharias (the parents of John the Baptist); twelve disciples made up of the leading Apostles Peter and Paul, the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and six other Apostles (Andrew, Philip, Thomas, James, Bartholomew, Simon); four church fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzos, John Chrysostom, Nicholas); and two prophets, John the Baptist and Elijah. These saints are depicted throughout with the same blue halo with a red frame. Although the major saints are recognisable from their distinct physiognomies, others, such as Philip and Thomas, John and Matthew, Anna and Elizabeth, were made to almost identical designs with only the colour of the enamel changing to differentiate them.

The high financial value of the materials and workmanship is designed to match the spiritual value of the contents. The covers were probably originally designed for a Gospel-book, and the image of Christ may well be a visualisation of his description in the Gospel of St John as the incarnate logos (Word of God). The technique of the enamels allows the covers to be dated to the late tenth or early eleventh century. This book cover is one of a group of three that were reused in the fourteenth century to house a set of liturgical manuscripts, probably commissioned by Doge Andrea Dandolo, for the high altar of San Marco (Venice 1995, 23, cats 34–8), part of his larger campaign to embellish the dogal church.

ANTONY EASTMOND

4.1 At Home: Ceramics

83

Glazed large bowl with a representation of a bird

Second half of the twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 10 cm; diameter 27 cm; diameter of base 10.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13536
SELECTED REFERENCES: Megaw 1968, no. 310, p. 104; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikiou and Bakirtzis 1999, no. 154, p. 81

The ceramic fabric is red and rather hard. The vase has a low ring base, a hemispherical body and an everted or outwardly folded rim with a bevelled edge. On the white slip coating the inside is *sgraffito* and painted decoration. On the bottom, in fine *sgraffito*, is a medallion with a bird between stems. The bird turns to the right and pecks at an ivy branch, and engraved behind it is a bent stem. The central medallion is encircled by an area of painted decoration in the form of a rinceau incorporated in triangular panels, executed in brownish purple and green. Around this is an engraved narrow band of running spiral. Painted around the ridge of the rim are clusters of brown and green brush strokes. A fine coat of colourless glaze covers the inside of the vase. Vases decorated with fine *sgraffito* and painted motifs have been found in various parts of the Byzantine world. Their places of production have yet to be identified.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

84

Plate with lion attacking a deer

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 4.6 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 13.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A.S. 38 [1406]
PROVENANCE: found in 1970 off Pelagonnisos and Alonnisos, two of the Sporades islands in the northwest Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones; now at Nea Anchialos in the storerooms of the archaeological site
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kritzas 1971, p. 179, fig. 9; Athens 1986, no. 276, p. 234; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 134, p. 123

Small parts of the rim of this plate are missing. The base is formed in the thickness of the body, with a mere suggestion of a ring. The body has a flat bottom and vertical walls as a kind of straight rim. The inner and outer surfaces are coated with white slip. The decoration, excellently rendered and carefully executed, consists of a lion with luxuriant mane attacking a roe deer. The head of the lion is represented in frontal pose with its tongue turned upwards and ending in a heart-shaped finial. The body is indicated by spots, the mane by uniform imbrications and the hair on the legs by dots. Dots are used also to denote the pelt of the roe deer. In the field are schematic branches with pine cones. A pale-yellow, shiny glaze, slightly damaged, coats the plate inside and outside.

ASPASIA DINA

85

Large bowl

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, h. 3 cm; diameter 24.5 cm; diameter of base 11.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A.S. 1683
PROVENANCE: found in 1970 off Pelagonnisos and Alonnisos, two of the Sporades islands in the northwest Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones; Nea Anchialos, storerooms of the archaeological site
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, no. 293, p. 241; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 155, p. 138

The bowl has survived intact, with flaking on the rim. The vase has a ring base and a deep body with slanting walls that form a straight rim in the upper part. The inside is coated with white slip. The carefully executed decoration consists of a medallion (tondo) occupying a large part of the bottom, within which a rinceau with palmette finial is developed on a ground of scales. Around the circumference of the medallion is rope pattern. At the centre of the bottom is a tiny hole, indicating the use of a pair of compasses. There is a pale-yellow glaze on the inside. The outside surface has been altered.

ASPASIA DINA

86

Plate with lioness

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 2.4 cm; diameter 23.5 cm; diameter of base 14.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 7th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Larissa, inv. no. N.A.S. 33 [1403]
PROVENANCE: found in 1970 off Pelagonnisos and Alonnisos, two of the Sporades islands in the north-west Aegean, in the wreck of a twelfth-century ship transporting domestic pottery and millstones; Nea Anchialos, storerooms of the archaeological site
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kritzas 1971, p. 181, fig. 7; Athens 1986, no. 279, pp. 235–6; Thessaloniki 1999, no. 143, p. 131

Part of the body and about half the rim are missing. The base is formed in the thickness of the body, with a mere suggestion of a ring. The body has a flat bottom and vertical walls as a kind of straight rim. There is a coat of white slip on the inner surface and a thinner coat on the outer. The intricate decoration, excellently rendered and carefully executed, comprises a central medallion (tondo) enclosing an animal, possibly a lioness, moving to the left and turning its head backwards. At the tip of its tail is a foliate motif. Surrounding the animal are schematic stems and a heart-shaped leaf. The medallion, the field of which is filled with scales, is encircled by a narrow band of bead-and-reel (astragal) pattern, interrupted by four medallions with schematic saplings in *champlevé* technique. Around this is a wider concentric band with pseudo-Kufic motifs, schematic saplings, stems and scales in the field. At the centre of the bottom is a tiny hole, indicating the use of a pair of compasses. There is a particularly shiny yellowish glaze inside and outside.

ASPASIA DINA

87

Plate with siren on a bird

Corinth, mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height approx. 7.7 cm; diameter 20.6 cm; diameter of base 6.6 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. c-31-05
PROVENANCE: found in a pit during excavations for the construction of the present museum
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935; Morgan 1942; Sanders 2003, fig. 23.2 to and table 23.3

The decoration of this plate, executed in the so-called Measles technique, depicts a siren apparently standing on the back of a large bird, perhaps an ostrich. To the right is a fish. If the iconography referred to Byzantine song or narrative, the tradition has not survived.

The plate is made of very pale-brown clay with black-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and over the lip outside. Figural *sgraffito* design was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay. The design has been highlighted with red slip dots. A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

GUY SANDERS

88

Plate with a deer and other animals

Corinth, Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1180–1200
Glazed ceramic, height 4 cm; diameter 22.9 cm; diameter of base 12.4 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. c-1929-003
PROVENANCE: found in the excavation of the North Market to the north of the Temple of Apollo, Corinth
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935; Morgan 1942; Sanders 2003, fig. 23.2.18 and table 23.3

A deer, standing to the right, is depicted scratching its nose with its left hind foot. The background is filled with a vine and palmette scroll populated with two hares and two doves. All the animals appear to be wearing collars. Any significance the scene may have had is no longer obvious. The decoration and shape of the plate is similar to plates made in precious metals.

The plate is made of reddish-yellow fabric with fine red-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and thinly washed over the exterior. A figural *champlevé* medallion was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay (this form of *champlevé* decoration precedes that of cat. 94). A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

Although the plate was once thought to be of local, Corinthian manufacture, recent unpublished research has identified phyllite inclusions, suggesting that it was possibly made in Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly.

GUY SANDERS

89

Jug with trefoil mouth

Arta, fourteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 22 cm; diameter of base 11 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 8th Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Ioannina Byzantine Museum, Paregoritissa Archaeological Collection, inv. no. AK 350
SELECTED REFERENCES: Papadopoulou and Touloupi 1993, p. 215, figs 5–6; Papadopoulou 2002, p. 21, fig. 12

Most of the mouth of this jug, an example of standard domestic ware in Late Byzantium, has been restored, and the body has been mended from numerous shards. It has a flat base, a fusiform body, a short cylindrical neck and a trefoil mouth. There is a strap handle from the neck to the mid-belly. The painted decoration in white slip comprises five large running spirals on the belly, with dots between them; similar decoration can be found on the mouth and in the zone near the base. On the handle there are oblique parallel lines. The glaze used is dark yellow.

POLYXENI DIMITRAKOPOULOU AND BARBARA PAPADOPOULOU

90

Fish-shaped perfume flask

Egypt, fifth–sixth centuries
Copper alloy, cast, engraved, 14.8 × 8.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11528
SELECTED REFERENCES: Amsterdam 1987, p. 246, no. 149 (L. Bouras); Thessaloniki 2002, p. 155, no. 169 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, p. 108, no. 70 (A. Drandaki); Lisbon 2007, p. 161, no. 79 (A. Drandaki)

The tail of the fish forms a quadrilateral base on which the vessel stands upright; the fish's mouth is also the mouth of the vessel. The surface realistically renders the overlapping scales of the fish. The loops on the upper side of the fins were presumably used for affixing a chain by which the vase was hung.

Fish-shaped vessels are known from Antiquity, with many examples from Pharaonic Egypt, but became particularly popular in Late Roman times when zoomorphic vessels proliferated (Riefstahl 1972, pp. 11–14; Boston 1967, no. 62 [G.M.A. Haufmann]; Eckardt 1999, pp. 66–8). There is an almost identical bronze flask in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, and another in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which retains its original hanging chain (Münster 1983, no. 15). Comparable examples in clay or glass document their wide dissemination in this period. Lamps and mirrors are also found in the shape of fishes (Jerusalem 2000, p. 123).

The fish is among the earliest and commonest Christian symbols, because the Greek word for fish, ΙΧΘΥΣ (*ichthys*), is an acrostic of the phrase Ιησούς Χριστός Θεού Υιός Σωτήρ (Jesus Christ Son of God Saviour). Its significance as a Christian symbol was reinforced by the numerous references to fish in the Gospels and primarily to two of Christ's miracles: the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Matthew XIV, 17–21) and the great catch of fish in Lake Galilee (Luke V, 1–7)

(Galavaris 1970, pp.57–8; Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp.22–3).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

91

Bowl with bird

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 4.8 cm; diameter 14 cm; diameter of base 6.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Thebes, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. 1st EBA 1943
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Koilakou 1986, pp.28–9, pl.527; Thessaloniki 1999, nos 58, 59

This ceramic bowl has a low ring base and slightly convex walls ending in a rudimentarily formed rim. Thick white slip coats the inside and the edge of the rim outside, while a thinner slip coats the rest of the external surface, including the base.

Inside the vase, which is covered with yellowish glaze, is incised *sgraffito* decoration: a bird turned right placed freely in the field, surrounded by filling motifs in radiate arrangement.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

92

Bowl with fish

Mid-twelfth century
Glazed ceramic, height 5.4 cm; diameter 11.5 cm; diameter of base 5.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Prefecture of Boeotia, Thebes, inv. no. 1st EBA 1944
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Koilakou 1986, pp.28–9, pl.52 ; Thessaloniki 1999, nos 5, 28

This ceramic bowl has a low ring base and thin slanting walls ending in a rudimentarily formed rim. Thick white slip coats the inside and the edge of the rim outside, while a thinner slip coats the rest of the external surface, including the base.

Inside the vase, which is covered with colourless glaze, is fine *sgraffito* decoration: at about the centre of the bottom is a fish with scaly body and open mouth, facing left and surrounded by forked motifs.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

93

Glazed bowl with a representation of a dancer

Cyprus, Paphos area, first half of the thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 7.4 cm; diameter 15.3 cm; diameter of base 7.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13609
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 633; Brussels 1982, p.233; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1984, pp.351–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1996, no. Paphos Workshop 73, p.102; Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikiou and Bakirtzis 1999, no.335, p.161; Thessaloniki 2002, no.227, pp.203–4

The ceramic fabric is dark red and hard. The bowl has a slightly raised foot with an upward-turned ring base and a carinated body (one whose curve is punctuated by a sharp angle) with an upright, curved rim. A dancer is represented in fine and incised *sgraffito* on the white slip coating the inside. The head and body are shown front on, while the feet and arms are turned to the right, in dance pose, and the figure holds with outstretched hands a kind of *krotala* (clappers or castanets) of lunate form. These are possibly the *phengia* to which Byzantine texts refer. The dancer has a round face crowned by curly hair, and large wide-open eyes. She – the sex of the dancer is not clear – wears a garment with an imbricated bodice and pleated skirt, whose flare conveys the dance movement. Inscribed in the field to the left of the figure is a cross-hatched disc. The dance scene on this Cypriot vase is similar to scenes of dancers and musicians found on ceramics at various sites in the Byzantine world. Brownish-yellow and green brush strokes add a touch of colour to the incised design. A slip-painted wavy line runs round the outside of the rim. The inside of the bowl has a green-tinged glaze, while the outside has a yellow glaze. It is possible to see at the bottom of the bowl scars from the use of a tripod stilt during firing.

Features such as the texture of the ceramic fabric and its shape and decoration place this vase among the products of the Paphos workshops in south-western Cyprus.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

94

Plate with two lovers in a garden

Corinth or Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly, 1200–30
Glazed ceramic, height 4.5 cm; diameter 25.3 cm; diameter of base 11.1 cm

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth, inv. no. c-1934-0054
PROVENANCE: part of a large dump of decorated glazed pottery found during the excavation of the South Basilica, Corinth
SELECTED REFERENCES: Morgan 1935; Morgan 1942; Sanders 2003, fig. 23.2.20 and table 23.5; Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp.155–6

A young man is shown on a folding seat with a crowned young woman, who sits on his lap. To the left is a tree, below them an ivy vine and to the right a rabbit or hare runs along the edge of the frame. As the rabbit is often found as a symbol for lust and fertility, the couple are perhaps lovers.

It has been suggested that the two lovers are the fictitious hero Digenis Akritas and the Amazon Queen Maximo. His exploits are narrated in a popular Byzantine epic poem. It has also been suggested that the composition is a satirical secular variation on the religious portrayal of the Virgin and Child.

The plate is made of reddish-brown fabric with red-and-white inclusions. White slip has been thickly applied over the interior and thinly washed over the exterior. A figural *champlevé* medallion was incised through the slip to reveal the body clay (this form of *champlevé* decoration is like that of cat.88). A pale-yellow lead glaze covers the interior surface.

Although the plate was once thought to be of local, Corinthian manufacture, recent unpublished research has identified phyllite inclusions, suggesting that manufacture in Lakonia or Eastern Thessaly is a possibility.

GUY SANDERS

95

Plate with animal

Late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 5.6 cm; diameter 21 cm; diameter of base 9.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Akrophoio, Prefecture of Boeotia, inv. no. BXM 1331
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Koilakou 1998, pp.106–8, pl.62β, Thessaloniki 1999, nos 58, 64

This ceramic plate with ring base and shallow body with slanting walls and bevelled rim is coated with white slip, which is thicker on the inside than on the outside. The inside of the plate is decorated using the *champlevé* technique: at the centre of the bottom is a large tondo enclosing an equine. The animal moves to the right but turns its head behind in the opposite direction. A schematic stem in the field of the tondo completes the composition. A group of four concentric circles, interrupted at intervals by sheaves of vertical lines, encircles the tondo.

Shiny glaze enriched with copper oxides which impart a greenish-yellow hue coats the inside and the outside of the rim, trickling towards the base. At the centre of the bottom is a hole indicating the use of a pair of compasses.

CHARIS KOILAKOU

96

Glazed small four-lobe bowl with a representation of a bird

Constantinople, eleventh century
Glazed ceramic, height 8.7 cm; diameter 13 cm; diameter of base 5.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13573
SELECTED REFERENCES: Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikiou and Bakirtzis 1999, no.11, p.21; Thessaloniki 2002, no.355, p.324 (D. Papanikola-Bakirtzi)

The ceramic fabric is off white and hard. The vase has a low ring base, a calyx-shaped body and forms four lobes in the upper part. It has painted decoration and belongs to the group known as 'Polychrome Ware'. The bottom is filled by a representation of a bird, which moves to the left and turns its head backwards. It has a long curving neck, open raised wings and short legs. Dots on the neck and scale pattern on the body render the plumage. The inside of the bowl is decorated with a band in a meandering pattern, while the outside has a wide band of re-curving stem. The decoration is executed in vitreous pigments: golden yellow, greenish blue and viscous white. Both the greenish blue and the white pigment are now altered. Black-purple paint is used for the outlines.

Polychrome Ware vases are perhaps the most frequently discussed examples of Byzantine ceramics. They were produced in workshops in Constantinople and have been found in small numbers at various places in the Byzantine world, mainly in important administrative and commercial centres, such as Corinth and Thessaloniki. However, they have been noted also in remote areas, such as the monastic centre on Mount Papikion on the slopes of the Rodopi mountain range in western Thrace.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

97

Glazed small bowl with a representation of a double-headed eagle

Late thirteenth or fourteenth century
Glazed ceramic, height 7 cm; diameter 12 cm; diameter of base 4.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 13591
SELECTED REFERENCE: Papanikola-Bakirtzi, Mavrikiou and Bakirtzis 1999, no.274, p.134

The ceramic fabric is red and hard. The vase has a low flaring base, a hemispherical body and a rim with a serrated edge. *Sgraffito* decoration is found on the white slip coating the inside and the upper part of the outside of the bowl: depicted at the bottom is a double-headed eagle in its familiar heraldic form, with one head facing East and the other turned to the West. It is executed in medium-point *sgraffito*, while at some points *champlevé* technique is used. It is not known precisely when the double-headed eagle motif appeared, but its association with the Palaiologan dynasty is accepted. Representations of the double-headed eagle are encountered not only on pottery but also in sculpture, miniatures and other media. A vase in the Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, is decorated with a *sgraffito* double-headed eagle and is dated to the fourteenth century (Thessaloniki 1999, no.83, p.79).

A pair of parallel lines runs around the inside of the rim, while around the outside is another pair of parallel lines, intersecting with parallel oblique lines. The interior of the bowl has a yellow glaze, characteristic of vases of the Late Byzantine period. The upper part of the exterior bowl has a green glaze. Scars from the use of tripod stilt during firing are visible at the bottom of the bowl.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

4.2
At Home: Metalwork

98

Bucket

Eastern Mediterranean, sixth century
Hammered, chased and punched brass, height, including handle 21 cm; diameter 17.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 32553
SELECTED REFERENCES: Deliverrias and Fotopoulos 1995, pp.178–9, nos 303, 306; Thessaloniki 2002, p.137, no.148 (A.Drandaki; Drandaki 2002, pp.37–53; Kotzamani 2002, pp.55–70; Arce 2005, pp.141–58; Lisbon 2007, p.158, no.77 (A.Drandaki)

This brass, cylindrical bucket or *situla* was made by hammering from a single sheet of metal and now has a green, and in some places brown, patina. Two lugs, fixed to either side of the rim, have holes in the middle for attaching the handle, which is made from a strong, curved, polygonal rod. On the exterior are three bands of decoration. The upper band bears the Greek inscription: ΥΓΙΕΝΩΝ ΧΡΩ ΚΥΡΙ(Ε) ΕΝ ΠΟΛΛΟΙΣ CΕ ΧΡΟΝΟΙC ΚΕ ΚΑΛΟΙC ΕΥΤΥΧΩC (Use this in good health, master, for many good years happily). In the wide central band is a hunting scene with five figures in groups, chasing a lioness and a leopard respectively: trees, plants and a hunting dog complete the scene. The lower band has triangular geometric patterns.

The bucket is similar to other vessels, distinctive for their uniform shape, identical techniques in manufacture and ornamentation, and common epigraphic elements in the letter forms and in the content of the inscriptions (Mundell Mango et al. 1989, pp.295–311; Mundell Mango 1995, pp.263–82; Drandaki 2002; Arce 2005, pp.141–58). Their provenance – where known – ranges from Mesopotamia and Palestine to East Anglia and Spain. Epigraphy and decoration point to a date in the sixth century and a manufacture in the Eastern Mediterranean. The buckets' inscriptions and ornament suggest a domestic use, with one exception, which is decorated with crosses and bears a dedicatory inscription indicating an ecclesiastical use, probably for holy water (Deichmann and Peschlow 1977, pp.39–40).

These buckets were designed to carry water and were probably part of the *instrumenta balnei* (bathing equipment). It is possible that they were part of a set with jugs, like for example, a copper-alloy jug in Trier, whose technique, decoration and inscription are identical (Scholl 1994, p.231, pl.xixa–b; Drandaki 2002, p.49). Such sets are also known from silver examples like those in the Sevso treasure (Mundell Mango and Bennett 1994, pp.319–401).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

99

Spoon with inscription

Byzantium, early seventh century
Beaten silver, turned (the handle) and nielloed (monogram and inscription), 24.9 × 3.9 cm; bowl diameter 1.9 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2394
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.25–6, no.13; Baratte 1992, p.19, note 44

This silver spoon is in good condition and bears the same monogram as the silver bowl decorated with niello work, also now in the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva (inv. no. AD 2384; see Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.24–25 and 39–40, no.12). We can assume, therefore, that it is part of the same service; the two pieces were acquired by the museum at the same time.

The bowl is connected to the handle, which has a lion's head at its end, by a circular monogrammed disk. At the bowl end of the handle, below the lion's head, an inscription is engraved in niello: ΦΙΛΙΤΟΥCΦΙΛΟΥC (Love your friends). The spoon stands comparison with examples adorned with a boar's head, which suggests a secular use (Baratte 1992, p.5). However, study of the monogram has revealed that it refers not to a name, but to a well-known invocation: ΚΥΡΙΕ ΒΩ(ΗΘΗ) (Saviour come to our aid) (Lazovic et al. 1977, p.37), which, although not linking the spoon to any specifically liturgical function, connects it at least to a recipient eager to affirm his or her Christian faith.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

100

Spoon with flat handle

Byzantium, sixth century (?)
Silver, 14.6 × 3.3 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2399
SELECTED REFERENCE: Lazovic et al. 1977, pp.11 and 27, no.15

This simple spoon has some decoration engraved on its handle, which depicts a naked shepherd holding a lamb in his arms. The figure, in profile and represented in a popular manner, cannot be interpreted as the Good Shepherd, a symbol of Christ, since he is depicted completely naked. The figure does, however, wear an earring, a prophylactic intended to protect the first male child and sometimes used for the Infant Jesus, as can be seen on a fresco in the Monastery of Marko, in Susica, near Skopje (1377–81) (Lazovic in Lazovic et al. 1977, p.11), or for other saints in a number of mid-Byzantine frescoes (Sophocleous 1994, no.12b, pp.82 and 136), including the icon of St James the Persian in Kato Paphos, dating from the late twelfth century. Like another spoon decorated with a victorious athlete and now in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, the shepherd reflects the bucolic themes of Greco-Roman Antiquity (Baratte 1992, p.12). It can be assumed that this is an object for secular use, and it shows

the continuation of Classical themes in works made for the rich.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

101, 102

Two spoons decorated with a panther and a lion

Constantinople (?), seventh century
Silver, length 25.8 cm (panther); length 25.7 cm (lion)

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, 1899.0425.25, 1899.0425.18
PROVENANCE: Lambousa, Cyprus
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, nos 416, 423; Hauser 1992, nos 186 and 193, pls 44b, 45b, 46b and 47e–f

These two spoons have a broad-tip ovoid bowl attached by a vertical disc to a square-ended handle. This is composed of a convex tube between two balusters, the outer one terminating in a ball finial. The inner surface of the bowl is ornamented with the profile image of a running animal in low relief, while the reverse side is incised with a foliate pattern.

Large and heavy spoons are a typical element of domestic silver plate of the sixth and seventh centuries, as *argentum escarium*, part of a dinner service. Such spoons are also noted for their elaborate decoration, normally arranged so as to be visible to a person holding the spoon horizontally in the right hand, as is the case here. The two spoons here belong to a set of eleven, which would originally have numbered the customary twelve. The other animals portrayed in this set include a ram, a boar, a hare, a stag, a bear, a tiger, a griffin and a horse. All eleven beasts on the spoons feature in Roman or Late Roman hunting scenes, as human or animal prey, with the horse as the hunter's mount. The ram and bull are often shown attacked by felines, while the griffin was considered an exotic prey native to India. Plates, bowls and other vessels were decorated with hunt imagery, in either mythical or contemporary contexts, alluding to heroic exploits and, perhaps, game presented at table.

The spoons formed part of the first Cyprus treasure, which also included the serving plate (cat.44), bowl (cat.45) and censer (cat.36).

MARLIA MUNDELL MANGO

103

Sword

Constantinople or Thessaloniki, fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century
Steel, forging, engraving, length 111 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, MAA inv.no 1120
SELECTED REFERENCES: Popović 1983, pp.167–77; Belgrade 1985, no.457

The double-edged sword has grooves on both sides. A prayer is inlaid in one side along the groove interrupted by a low-relief application representing a bust of the Mother of God Hodegetria holding the Christ Child on her left arm. The verse reads: ZH O EIC CE EΛΠIZΩN OY AΠOTIX(OI) (May he flourish, who trusts in you that he will not fail). This and other similar prayers are often inscribed on high-quality Byzantine weapons of the period. This is ceremonial weaponry and must have been made for wealthy Orthodox patrons who put their trust in Christ and the Virgin. The high-quality blade was most likely made in Constantinople or Thessaloniki. The sword was a chance find in 1923 during building excavations for the Belgrade electric power plant; it was buried in sand on the right bank of the Danube.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIĆ

104

Bowl (*trulla*) with Aphrodite

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, height 7.3 cm; diameter 16.5 cm; length with handle 31.3 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 899
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.319, fig.3, no.10; Dodd 1961, p.162, no.50; Athens 1964, pp.386–87, no.506; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, no.256

This deep, hemispherical, hammered vessel has a low ring base and a flattened trapezoidal handle. On the inside, a group of concentric grooves surrounds the edge of the body and another group encircles its centre, forming a boss with traces of gilding. The rim is decorated with incised spiral-meander pattern, and the handle, defined by a band of triangle motifs, with a representation of Aphrodite, half-naked and standing on a pillar-shaped pedestal with vegetal ornament on the front. In her raised hands the goddess holds a flower and part of the end of the ribbon in her hair. The decoration of the six-lobe projection of the rim consists of a schematic head of Oceanos, in frontal pose, in the middle, flanked in pairs to right and left by busts of young girls in medallions, in three-quarter pose. In the outermost single lobes are rosettes. The interstices between the engraved medallions and the rosettes are filled with vertical wavy motifs. The bowl was most probably damaged during earth-removal works at the site where the hoard was found. On the base of the vessel are the five stamps of the reign of Herakleios (610–41).

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

105

Plate

Constantinople, 602–10
Silver, diameter 15.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 893
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.319, fig.3, no.4; Dodd 1961, no.32 (602–10); Athens 1964, p.384, no.501; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, nos 338 and 381

This small hammered plate has a low ring base. On the inside, concentric circular grooves surround the edge and corresponding grooves encircle the bottom, where a boss is engraved with a Latin cross with finials. The cross is executed in niello. There are traces of gilding in the concentric grooves at the bottom. On the base of the vessel is a system of five stamps which date the piece to the reign of Phokas (602–10). Such shallow plates with crosses are characteristic of the sixth and seventh centuries (Leader-Newby 2004, p. 177).

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

106

Plate

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, diameter 25.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 896
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.319, fig.3, no.5; Dodd 1961, no.42; Athens 1964, p.385, no.503

This hammered plate (*pinakion*) has a low ring base. On the inside, concentric circular grooves surround the edge and corresponding grooves, with gilding, encircle the bottom where there is a boss inscribed with a Greek cross with finials. Around the boss is a band with a wreath of ivy leaves in niello. On the base of the vessel are the five official stamps made in Constantinople which date the piece to the reign of Herakleios (610–41).

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

107, 108, 109

Three spoons

Constantinople, 610–25
Silver, length 22 cm; length 25.5 cm; length 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 901, BXM 905, BXM 908
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.319, fig.3, no.1; Hauser 1992, no.129 (group 4.2), pp.182–4 (subgroup 8.2), pp.206–9 (group 10), pls 43 and 49a; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2002, no.381

These three spoons are not all of the same form. Some have shallow, some deeper bowls, and the handles too are of different types. The backs of some of the bowls are decorated with engraved palm leaves.

The eight spoons in the Krategos hoard from Mytilene fall into three typological groups. The first, represented by four spoons (BXM 901–904), is distinguished by the flattened and shallow bowl, and the fact that it is the only one marked with the cruciform monogram CEBOY on the outer side of the disc-shaped element. Characteristic of the second group, with three examples (BXM 905–907) of larger size, is the deep elongated bowl. There is only one example of the third group (BXM 908), which has a particularly concave and narrow bowl.

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

110

Bracelet

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, diameter 5.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 888
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, Lesbos
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.327, no.5, fig.1; Athens 1964, no.395, p.366; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.231, p.204 (C. Baltoyanni); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.176, 182, no.2b; Thessaloniki 2002, no.516, p.410 (E. Meramveliotaki); Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The elliptical piece of jewellery is formed from a cylinder of gold sheet, the hollow inside of which is filled with grains of sand in order to keep its shape. The midpoint of the upper side, where the two ends of the gold sheet meet, is masked by a ring consisting of ten solid globules. On either side of the ring are stamped two identical pierced-work cruciform monograms, obviously denoting the owner of the ornament, inscribed within a double circular frame which is bordered to left and right by one multi-lobe and one granulated band. Around the remaining periphery of the bracelet, apart from its lower edge, which is also its thinnest point, run three fine grooved bands horizontally, between which two other bands with stippled decoration are interposed.

The type of bracelet (*psellion*) is rare. The closest examples, but with simpler decoration, are a pair of gold bracelets of the sixth–seventh centuries, in a private collection in New York (New York 1988, no.45, p.59), and the likewise gold *psellion* no.59.64 in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1965, no.4c, p. 7; New York 1988, no.46, p.59; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.182, no.1b).

EUGENIA CHALKIA

111

Buckle

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, length 5.4 cm; width of buckle plate 1.8 cm; diameter of hoop 2.1 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 881
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, Lesbos
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.327, no.8, fig.1; Athens 1964, no.393, p.365; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.233, p.204 (C. Baltoyanni); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.229, no.4.d, 2; Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The buckle comprises an elliptical loop and an attachment plate, connected to each other by a hinge consisting of six globules joined together by a fine cotter-pin. The loop is cast, undecorated and has a tongue with a rectangular bar with a mount for a semiprecious stone, now lost, and a solid hook decorated with a pierced-work palmette on the back surface of its terminal. The plate is also cast, with a concave back surface on which the motifs of the front are discerned embossed and there are three looped strips (one at the lower edge and two at the ends of the upper side) for affixing to the belt. The main body of the plate is almond-shaped and formed from three concentric bands (the outer one twisted, the middle of contiguous pierced-work triangles and the inner of rope pattern), which surround a repoussé 'eye'. On the upper part of the plate is a narrow 'collar' with rectilinear upper side and triangular finial, decorated with pierced-work geometric designs.

This type of buckle is not very well known, as is the case with the more widely diffused lyre-shaped ones. The closest examples are the gold buckle in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1965, no.5, p.8, AA pl.XI, Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.229, no.3) and two bronze ones (Csallány 1956, p.262, nos 2–3, pls 1, 2 and 3-3 a).

EUGENIA CHALKIA

112

Seal

Constantinople, 610–25
Bronze, base 5.7 × 5.7 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 909
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.319, fig.3, no.7; Athens 1964, p.405, no.531

The seal has in reverse a relief monogram (Maurikios [?], Staurakios [?]), and a ring-shaped vertical handle, on whose bezel is an eagle with uplifted wings and a monogram in reverse (possibly for Herakleios or an official post).

Perhaps the eagle with uplifted wings signifies that this was the seal of a consul. If so, the owner of the seal (maybe Maurikios or Staurakios) must have held this office. However, this argument is far from conclusive as the symbol used by consuls might have been appropriated by other officials. The name Maurikios is found on a lead bull in the Zakos Collection (no. 2812). However, if the owner of this monogram is identified as Staurakios, then the owner of the seal could be identified with the official known on a lead bull in Dumbarton Oaks (Martindale 1992, p. 1182).

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

113.1

Solidi

Constantinople, 602–10
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 910
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: BXM 910 (2), Officina ε, issue date 1.9.607 and later: Hahn 1981, 9; BXM 910 (4), Officina I, issue date 609 and later: Hahn 1981, 12a

On the obverse is a bust of Phokas, wearing a crown surmounted by a cross and holding a cross in his right hand. *Inscription:* DNFOCAS–PERPAVG. On the reverse is an angel with a sceptre surmounted by a cross and a *globus cruciger*. *Inscription:* VICTORIA-AVGV (officina), with, in the exergue, a further inscription: CONOB.

113.2

Solidi

Constantinople, 610–41
Gold

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 911
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, island of Lesbos, 1951
SELECTED REFERENCES: BXM 911 (3), Officina ε, issue date 22.1.613–616: Hahn 1981, 8; BXM 911 (4), Officina ε, issue date 22.1.613–616: Hahn 1981, 8; BXM 911 (9), Hahn 1981, 8, Officina Z (left–right), issue date 22.1.613–616: Hahn 1981, 8; BXM 911 (14), Officina ε, issue date 22.1.613–616: Hahn 1981, 9a; BXM 911 (15), Officina S, issue date 22.1.613–616: Hahn 1981, 10; BXM 911 (16), Officina ε, issue date 616–625: Hahn 1981, 11; BXM 911 (28), Officina ε, issue date 616–625: Hahn 1981, 11

On the obverse are busts of Herakleios (610–41) and his son Herakleios Constantine (641), each with a crown surmounted by a cross. *Inscription:* DD NN HERACLIUS ET HERA CONST CAES. On the reverse is a cross on a stepped base. *Inscription:* VICTORIA-AVGA (officina), with, in the exergue, a further inscription: CONOB.

IOANNIS TOURATSOGLOU

114

Ewer with biblical scenes

Rome (?), late fourth century
Silver-gilt, 21.3 × 8.7 cm

Courtesy of the Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland, GVA 1
PROVENANCE: excavated at Traprain Law, twenty miles east of Edinburgh, 1919
SELECTED REFERENCES: Curle 1923; London 1994, no.35, p.51 (M. Mundell Mango); Fort Worth 2007, no.75, pp.253–5

This silver-gilt hammered ewer, whose handle is missing, has five zones of repoussé relief: a band of acanthus leaves around the upper body; a pastoral frieze with sheep and butting rams; a band of grapevines; a figural frieze; and an ornamental base band. The figural frieze has four Christian scenes: naked figures of Adam and Eve covering themselves with fig leaves and between them the Tree of Knowledge and the serpent; to the left, Moses striking water from the rock; to the right, a scene interpreted (Fort Worth 2007) as the miracle of the quails in the desert (Exodus XVI, 13); and the Adoration of the Magi. The meaning of this unusual combination of scenes has been suggested as the redemption of human sin through the coming of Christ, with the water as symbol of baptism and the quails the symbol of the Eucharist (Fort Worth 2007).

The ewer was discovered during the excavation in 1919 at the hill fort between Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall, thought to be the capital of the Votadini tribe. The find included more than 100 pieces of silver chopped into pieces for its bullion value and perhaps comprising more than one set of looted domestic silver of the late fourth and early fifth centuries (five decorated flasks or ewers, large plates, at least 50 bowls and basins, goblets and spoons) (London 1994). As this was not a hoard of the same kind as the contemporary Esquiline treasure (cat.12) or the late Lambousa hoard (cats 36, 45) or Krategos treasure (cats 107, 108, 109, 112, 113.1, 113.2), there has been some speculation about the

circumstances of its burial: was it the pay of a Roman soldier living at the northern frontier, or was it the booty of brigands?

ROBIN CORMACK

115

Silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora

Constantinople, between 11 January 1055 and 31 August 1056
Silver, gilt, niello, diameter 3.28 cm; weight 32.96 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1992.5-1.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Entwistle and Cowell 1994, pp.91–3, pls 47–8; Athens 2000, no.43, p.364 (C. Entwistle)

The obverse is decorated with a nimbed bust of the Virgin Blachernitissa wearing a tunic and *maphorion* and a Greek inscription: ΟΥΓΓΙΑ ΜΙΑ (οὐγγία μία, 1 oz.). The reverse's centre, which is in the form of a raised medallion, is struck with a bust of the empress Theodora wearing a crown with cross and pendilia, a pearl collar, and a *loros*. In her left hand she holds a sceptre decorated with pellets, and in her right a *globus cruciger*. Around the edge of the weight is a partly nielloed inscription: ΘΚΕ ΒΟΗΘΕΙ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΑ ΑΥΓΟΥΤ ΤΗ ΠΟΡΦΥΡ / ΓΕΝΗΤΟ (Θ[εοτό]κε βοήθει Θεοδώρα αὐγού[σ]τ[α] τῃ πορφυρο[γ]εν[ν]ήτῳ; Mother of God, protect Theodora Augusta Porphyrogenneta). Much of the original gilding has been lost.

The empress Theodora ruled for two brief periods in the mid-eleventh century: the first with her sister Zoe between 20 April and 11 June 1042, the second from the death of Constantine IX on 11 January 1055 to her death on 31 August 1056. Coin parallels suggest that the weight belongs to her second reign (Grierson 1973, pp.752–3, pl. LXII). The appearance of the Virgin Blachernitissa on mid-eleventh century coins may be connected with the sexcentenary celebrations of the church of the Blachernae in Constantinople, which had been founded and built around 450. The inscription on the obverse of this weight is problematic, suggesting as it does that the eleventh-century pound weighed approximately 396 g, a figure far in excess of that proposed by Schilbach in his comprehensive study on Byzantine metrology (Schilbach 1970, pp.166–8). Possibly this is not a commodity weight at all, but some form of imperial donative.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

116

One-pound commodity weight with two emperors

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century
Leaded brass, 6.9 × 6.2 cm; weight 323.76 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1865.12-28.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.485, p.97; Entwistle 2006, pp.227–35

The weight is engraved on the face with two imperial figures standing slightly to right. Each emperor is diademed and nimbate, wears a cuirass, paludamentum fastened by a stylised fibula, pteruges and open-toed boots and holds a spear in his left hand and an imbricated shield in his right. In the bottom right corner is the figure of a leopard with backward-turned head with, above it, a tree, the lower branches of which terminate in berries, the upper in round fruit. At centre bottom is the denominational mark for one pound. Parts of the shields, cuirasses, paludamenta, sleeves and boots are inlaid with copper, the emperors' faces, hands, legs, denominational mark and leopard's head with silver.

The Byzantines employed a duodecimal weight system for weighing both coins and commodities. The basic unit of this system was the Byzantine pound (*litra*), derived from the Late Roman pound, which appears on weights as the Greek letter lambda Λ (or ↑). The *litra* was divided into twelve ounces, the ounce into multiples of the *scripulum*, which, at 1.13 g, was the smallest unit of the libral system. The *litra* was also divisible into 72 *solidi*: the *solidus*, later known as the *nomisma*, was the standard gold coin introduced by Constantine the Great in 309, which was to retain its weight and fineness well into the tenth century. In addition to providing the weight with legitimacy, the two emperors symbolise the political unity of the empire at a time when it was split between western and eastern halves for administrative purposes.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

117

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century
Leaded brass, 5.6 × 5.8 cm; weight 318.11 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1986.6-1.3
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no.33, p.50 (C. Entwistle); Entwistle 2006, figs 2 and 4

The front is engraved with a square frame enclosing two frontal imperial busts, diademed and wearing paludamenta. On either side of the frame is the draped figure of a tyche, appearing to support the frame with an outstretched arm; above each tyche is a cross. The tyche on the right has a mural crown and holds a torch in her right hand. Between the tyches is a kneeling, half-nude, female figure with arms akimbo; beneath her left arm is a shield and, flanking her head, is the denominational mark for one pound. The crosses, tyches' faces, arms and parts of their drapery, the kneeling figure's face and arms, the mark and emperors' faces are inlaid with silver (four of the faces modern restorations); the emperors' diadems and paludamenta, the frame, torch, crown of the left-hand tyche, parts of the tyches' and woman's drapery are inlaid with copper.

The arrangement of two imperial busts within an icon-like frame is paralleled on another weight in the Menil Collection, Houston; here, though, two personifications, perhaps of the abundance of earth and sea, recline beneath the frame (Nesbitt forthcoming, no.A,III,10). There are no known parallels for the kneeling female figure on other Late Antique weights and her significance in this context is unclear. Professor Cyril Mango (pers. comm.) has suggested that the figure may be Ge (Tellus), although representations of her on mosaics, silver and medallions tend to show her either as a bust or as a recumbent figure (Parrish 1984, no.13, pp.122–5; New York 1979, no.164, pp.185–6). Ge would, however, as a symbol of abundance, be an appropriate motif for a weight. The two tyches presumably represent Rome and Constantinople.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

118

One-pound commodity weight with imperial figures

Eastern Mediterranean, late fourth–fifth century
Gunmetal, 6.7 × 6.1 cm; weight 323.71 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1980.6-1
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no.32, p.49 (C. Entwistle); Entwistle 2006, fig.3

The front is engraved with two imperial figures standing slightly to the right. Each emperor is diademed and nimbate, wears a cuirass, paludamentum fastened by a stylised fibula, pteruges and calf-length boots, and holds a spear in his left hand and an oval shield in his right. In the bottom right corner is the figure of a rearing lion with backward-turned head with, above it, a tree whose branches terminate in five-petalled blossoms. In the bottom left corner, within a square frame, is the denominational mark for one pound; above the head of the left-hand emperor, a cross. The cross, figures' faces, hands and legs, shield bosses, mark and the face of the lion are inlaid with silver, parts of the sleeves, paludamenta and boots with copper.

The composition of two standing emperors attacking an animal or animals is common on Late Antique weights (see also cat.115). A one-pound weight in the Menil Collection, Houston, provides a particularly close parallel, although the figures there are depicted within an elaborate architectural framework (New York 1979, no.324, p.343). The figures on the above weight have often been erroneously described as military saints (either St Demetrios or St George, or St Theodore Stratelates and St Theodore Tiro), but cuirass, diadem and paludamenta fastened by fibulae are specifically imperial attributes in this period.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

4.3 At Home: Jewellery and Adornment

119

Gold pendant

Eastern Mediterranean or southern Baltic, Early Byzantine, sixth–seventh century
Gold foil, gilt copper-alloy pins, diameter 9.5 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. Purchase, the Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 66.76
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondoleon 1987; Richmond 1994, pp.108–11, no.37; Ross 2005

This unusual pendant is composed of two sheets of gold foil laid over a fill material (largely of calcium carbonate with a resin binder). At the centre of the front side is a medallion with the bust of a winged female holding up a cloth filled with fruit. She is surrounded by a band of twelve medallions; the four medallions on the axes contain equal armed crosses and the other eight contain busts of an emperor in profile, echoing the conventions of design for obverses in Roman coinage. The back of the pendant is chased with an eight-pointed star, each segment of which is filled with a stylised leaf pattern.

The pendant is fitted with two loops at the top for suspension, but the fragility of the thin foil suggests that this piece of jewellery was not intended for everyday wear, but probably served as a funerary adornment. The use of imperial busts can be traced to a Late Roman fashion for numismatic jewellery which involved setting actual gold coins and medallions (or imitations of them) into the most sumptuous gold jewellery (belts, necklaces, bracelets). The foliate decoration of the reverse side finds its closest parallel in the reverse of an inlaid garnet pendant from the Olbia treasure in South Russia, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Ross 2005, pp.117–19, cat.166). The female bust with fruit is close to contemporary representations of Ge, the personification of Earth, found on jewellery, textiles and mosaics of the Eastern Mediterranean. The abundance of the earth, along with the symbols of the Cross, and the imperial busts, unite in this unique and inventive composition to evoke many types of guardians, undoubtedly serving as an amulet for a wealthy deceased woman who lived, perhaps, on the north-eastern borders of the empire.

CHRISTINE KONDOLEON

120

Necklace

c.330–350

Gold, precious stones (twelve missing), 12.8 × 22.8 cm; plaques 2.6 × 2.2 cm

N. P. Goulandris Foundation, Museum of Cycladic Art, Athens, inv.no.Z-438.1
PROVENANCE: Polis Chrysochous (ancient Marion), Paphos District, Cyprus
SELECTED REFERENCES: Grabar 1966B, pl.209; Metzger 1980; Oliver 1996; Niemeyer 1997; Tatton-Brown 1997, p.61; Yeroulanou 1999, no.31, p.208; Lubsen-Admiraal 2004, no.692, pp.272, 316–17

Six rectangular openwork plaques with fine scrolls and sapphires in oval settings alternate with pairs of figure-of-eight elements, each consisting of emeralds and garnets mounted in settings separated by pearls threaded on gold wire. A seventh openwork plaque mounted with a rectangular emerald and with a pendant below forms the central element.

This necklace is a fine example of the openwork technique (Lubsen-Admiraal 2004, no. 692, p.316) often called *opus interrasile*, a term originating with Pliny (N.H.XII.94), although the Greek term *diatritos* ('pierced') is more accurate (Ogden and Schmidt 1990, pp.5–8, 10–12). It encompasses a distinctive variety of jewellery encountered in Mediterranean regions from the third century to the seventh, characterised by thin pierced sheets of gold (Ogden 1982, pp.34, 43), creating a lace-like effect, often combined with precious stones. Although the production centres remain unidentified, the distribution of types attests to innovations introduced by goldsmiths, who continued to draw on the Hellenistic, Roman and Near Eastern traditions for shapes and motifs (Yeroulanou 1999, no.31, pp.15–27, 90, 191–7).

The necklace from Cyprus has been interpreted as a diadem based on fourth-century representations (Grabar 1966B, pl.209) or as an ornament sewn onto a ceremonial robe (Metzger 1980, pp.4–5). This view, supported by the absent clasps, the presence of side holes, wire frames and incised Greek letters at the back of the elements (Niemeyer 1997, p.192), is corroborated by its recovery from a tomb together with other jewellery (Oliver 1996, p.140) and personal items attributed to a woman of some rank.

MARIA DHOGA-TOLI

121

The Berlin Collar

Second half of the sixth or first half of the seventh century
Gold, emeralds, sapphires, one amethyst, pearls, diameter 23 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv.30219, 505
PROVENANCE: acquired as part of the so-called Assiut treasure, Cairo, 1909 (formerly in the von Gans Collection)
SELECTED REFERENCES: Zahn 1913; Dennison 1918, pp.146–9, no.14; Niemeyer 1997; Niemeyer 1998; Stolz 2007

The Berlin Collar is the only broad collar with pendants to have survived from the Early Byzantine period. The technique, the elaborate motifs of its pierced work and its settings all suggest that it dates from the second half of the sixth or the first half of the seventh century. A dating to this period is corroborated by the dates of a necklace (cat.125) and a pair of bracelets from the same treasure: they were probably made as a set together with the collar, that is in the same workshop at around the same time (Yeroulanou 1999, no.228, p.245).

Based on the evidence gathered from images, broad collars with pendants like the Berlin piece were reserved for Constantinopolis and Roma, Maria and Agnes (personifications of Constantinople and Rome, and the Virgin and St Agnes) in imperial attire, and female members of the imperial family from the early fifth century onwards. It is thus possible that broad collars with pendants were considered regalia at the time the Berlin Collar was made.

Richly decorated with emeralds, hyacinths (sapphires, one amethyst) and pearls, the Berlin Collar stands out among other pieces of jewellery from the same period. According to literary sources and images, these materials typically appear on regalia. Although the use of emeralds, hyacinths and pearls on normal pieces of jewellery was not forbidden, an edict from the later fifth century states that these materials should not be attached to, and had to be removed from, certain pieces of jewellery, most probably regalia. The same edict also decrees that regalia and imperial jewellery should be made in the palatine workshops.

The shape of the Berlin Collar and its materials may therefore suggest that it functioned as a regalium for a female member of the imperial family and that it was made in Constantinople.

YVONNE STOLZ

122

Necklace

Constantinople (?), seventh century
Gold, length 55.5; diameter of medallions 2.5 cm

Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, Department of Antiquities, inv.no.1959/X-9/1
PROVENANCE: probably from Lambousa (Kyrenia District); purchase from Mr Neophytos Moustakas
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pierides 1971, p.52, pl.XXXV; Karageorghis 1962, p.29, pl.XLVII

This gold necklace is composed of nineteen medallions linked to each other by loops. The medallions are decorated with scrolls and cross-shaped ornaments in a pierced openwork technique. The two ends are fastened by hook and loop. The openwork technique is found in other precious jewellery of this period. It is quite probable that the necklace was buried in Lambousa during the Arab raids on the city in 653 and 654.

PAVLOS FLOURENTZOS

123

Necklace

Antinoe, Egypt, fifth century
Gold with sapphires, amethysts, emeralds and pearls, length 42.8 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.1778
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no.223, p.143, pl.43; Dallas 1990, p.73, pl.53; Georgoula 1999, no.110, pp.304–6.

The gold chain is strung with beads of sapphire, amethyst, emerald and pearls. Between the beads and beside each link of the chain are small spacer beads of gold. The hook and the loop for fastening

the necklace are attached to the terminals by plain gold discs.

Necklaces of this type have been found in treasures or hoards, buried by their owners during a period of invasions and now important evidence for studying and for dating pieces of jewellery. The closest parallel for the Benaki Museum necklace is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, and comes from the Piazza della Consolazione treasure, discovered in Rome (Ross 1965, no.18, pls B and 1). Beads of precious stones and pearls alternate in the same manner on the chain, and there are likewise small gold spacer beads adjacent to each stone. Pieces of jewellery from the treasure, now dispersed in various collections, are dated to the early fifth century. The similarity of the necklace to a comparable piece from a particularly significant treasure found at Carthage, now in the British Museum, London (Inv. no.MLA AF 323-330, Tait 1986, p.98, pl.220) confirms this dating. The plain little discs connecting the hook and the loop of the fastening occur on a necklace from the Assiut treasure in Egypt (Dennison 1918, no.13, pl.XXXIII). Similar discs on later examples of the sixth and seventh centuries are usually of filigree or pierced work.

Necklaces strung with rows of precious-stone beads seem to have been a basic item of adornment of every empress or wife of a high official, as attested by the depiction of Empress Theodora and her retinue in the mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna (fig.30), as well as by other representations on coins and ivories (see the consular diptych of Stilicho: Volbach 1961, pl.62). Furthermore, the copious use of precious stones in jewellery of the period bears witness to the flourishing trade with the Orient, particularly with the Indies and Ceylon.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

124

Chain necklace

Byzantium, sixth–seventh century
Gold and semi-precious stones, length 45.7 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 54.344
PROVENANCE: purchased by D. Kelekian with two other pieces of gold chain jewellery, all said to be from Fayum, 1909
SELECTED REFERENCES: Baltimore 1980, no.439, pp.155, 157; New York 1984, no.106, p.110; Yeroulanou 1999, no.53, pp.47, 121, 139 (fig.254), 213

This necklace represents a tradition in early Byzantium, rooted deeply in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt, for the display of wealth and social status (Brown 1984; Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp.1–22, 32–3, 159–61; Walker in New York 2000; Ross 2005, pp.1–70). The gold-wire chain links a varying alternation of shaped and coloured beads between terminal cross-medallions at the ends. Details include, at the clasp, tiny convex dots of gold wire, flattened underneath to reinforce points of contact; and links twisted to make each segment a figure of eight stretched straight for threading in the middle, and bent at both ends into hooks that twist into opposed right-angle planes.

Pearls, highly prized by the Byzantines, begin the sequence at the clasp medallions. Pearls at this time were associated with light itself, with Christ, and sometimes with Aphrodite, who is secularised in popular culture (MacCoull 1988, pp.68–76 and 147–50; Ross 2005, no.12, pp.18–19; Terry and Maguire 2007, pp.139–40). The pearls are used to create space between amethysts of two tones, like watered and unwatered wine, a stone named in antithesis to drunkenness; in a similar way emerald-like glass beads of a colour associated with verdure and esteemed for its protection of women's health are placed in repeated near-pairings of shapes and colours across the span of the wearer's neck.

The gesture of closing the necklace and the protective design of its floral cross terminals links and binds physical securing with spiritual security: faith flowering into eternal life. They point to the Byzantine adoption of the Egyptian lotus, the flower that rises from the Nile, with life-giving divine associations (Ross 2005, p.11; Rudolph 1995, no.82A and pl.283; Urbana-Champaign 1999, no.A18, pp.34ff and 61).

EUNICE DAUTERMAN MAGUIRE

125

Gold necklace with sapphires and emeralds

Probably Constantinople, late sixth–early seventh century
Gold, emerald, sapphire, sardonyx, pearls, length 79 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv.no.30219, 508b
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, no.12; Yeroulanou 1999, no.36 and p.45, fig.57; Munich 2004, no.490 (G. Platz-Horster); Stolz 2007, pp.534, 555 and 577, pl.3,1

The necklace consists of 28 elements. The centrepiece is a mounted sardonyx cameo with the head of the goddess Artemis, which is probably contemporary with the necklace (Spier 2007, p.140, cat.768). Fourteen six-petalled flowers in openwork technique (*opus interrasile*) alternate with near rectangular emeralds in bezel settings and oval sapphires in claw settings, each surrounded by rows of pearls. Even though framing strings of pearls appeared from the third century until after Byzantium, the *opus interrasile* elements clearly mark this piece as Early Byzantine. Also typical for this period is the use of sapphires and emeralds, while in the Middle Byzantine period precious stones were usually replaced by colourful enamels.

However, the precise dating is debated. The necklace is part of the so-called Assiut treasure (see cats 121, 127), whose 36 pieces were apparently collected over a long period and date from the fourth to the seventh centuries. Although coins on other pieces (such as cat.127) provide a *terminus ad* or *post quem*, this necklace lacks internal clues for dating. It can only be dated through stylistic and technical comparison. In fact, very few pieces of Early Byzantine jewellery can be dated reliably. Platz-Horster and Yeroulanou suggested a date around 500, while Stolz recently placed it in the same workshop as cat.121, which she dates convincingly on the basis of analyses of settings and style of the pierced work to the late sixth to early seventh centuries.

The necklace is unique in its combination of round *opus interrasile* elements and mounted precious stones. Circular openwork discs were quite common as necklace (or body chain) elements and clasps, but either alternate with unmounted precious stones such as amethysts, sapphires or emeralds, or consist entirely of openwork discs (for example, Georgoula 1999, p.301, fig.217; London 1994, no.97).

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUICKBIE

126

Gold body-chain

Byzantine, sixth–early seventh century AD
Gold, length 72 cm; diameter of large medallions 7.78 cm; weight 643.2 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1916.7-4.1
PROVENANCE: found in Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, no.15; London 1977, no.163; London 1994, no.97, Munich 2004, no.493

This outstanding piece of jewellery is one of 36 objects, ranging in date from the third century AD or earlier to the seventh, allegedly found in Middle Egypt, either near Assiut or at Shēkh Abâda (Antinoopolis), before 1909.

The ornament consists of four chains that passed over the shoulders and under the arms of the wearer, crossing on the chest and back, where they are joined to large openwork gold medallions, pierced in the goldworking technique often referred to as *opus interrasile*. Each chain consists of a linked series of 23 small openwork discs, of two patterns, namely a quatrefoil enclosing four cinquefoils, and an eight-petalled rosette containing alternating trefoil and spear-head motifs within the petals. These two designs recur in the large medallions, each of which incorporates one central and six surrounding discs.

The chain, unlike that from the Hoxne treasure (cat.131), is large enough to have been slipped over the head by an adult woman. Loose body-chains of this kind and small, closely fitted ones, are both depicted in Roman art.

CATHERINE JOHNS

127

Gold necklace with pendant

Probably Egypt, late sixth–early seventh century
Gold, diameter of necklace 23.5 cm; height of pendant 11.7 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv.no.30219, 506/506a
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, nos 3, 4; Künzelsau 1995, no.F2 (B. Deppert-Lippitz); Hamm 1996, no.206 (G. Platz-Horster); Niemeyer 1997, pp.201–3; Yeroulanou 1999, no.10 and p.38, fig.47, p.128, figs 203, 228; Platz-Horster 2004, p.286; Munich 2004, no.484 (G. Platz-Horster); Stolz 2007, pp.552–4, 562–3 and 592, pls 18,1–2; Stolz forthcoming

This heavy necklace (547 g) consists of a torque holding an ensemble of fourteen coins from the reigns of Justinian I (527–65) to Maurice (582–602), and a disc with the Greek words ΦΩC (light) and ZΩH (life; the counterpart is lost). In the centre is an imitation imperial medallion representing an emperor, possibly Constantine the Great, with a personification of the city of Constantinople on the reverse. Both sides bear the blessing inscription KY(PIE) BOHΘ(E)I TH ΦOPOYCA (Lord, help the wearer). The female ending indicates that this necklace was worn by a woman. The broad *opus interrasile* frame of the circular pendant surrounds a medallion showing the Annunciation and the Wedding at Cana on the reverse.

The necklace is part of the so-called Assiut treasure, which consists of 36 high-quality pieces of gold jewellery adorned with pearls, sapphires and emeralds, dating from the fourth to the seventh centuries and probably buried in the middle of the seventh century (see cats 121, 125). Among them is a counterpart for this necklace (Lawton 1983, p.182; Künzelsau 1995, no.F2), probably forming a pair for a married couple, most likely made on the occasion of their wedding. The latest coins provide a clue for its dating to the late sixth to early seventh century. A similar but smaller pendant (7.64 cm) has also been identified as wedding jewellery, perhaps for the marriage of a daughter of Emperor Tiberios in 582 (Munich 2004, no.505), but, according to recent research, it was most likely made for a non-imperial couple (Stolz forthcoming).

The provenance of this necklace is uncertain: Platz-Horster (2004, p.286) argues for courtly circles of Constantinople, considering the quality and value, as well as the imperial and religious iconography. However, Stolz (2007, pp.556–7) convincingly suggests production in Egypt, especially because of the three-petalled rosettes, which appear mostly on jewellery found or said to have been found in Egypt.

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUICKBIE

128

Gold coin-set pendant

Eastern Mediterranean (?), mid- to late fourth century AD
Gold, diameter 9.2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1984.5-1.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Buckton 1983–84, pp.15–20; London 1994, no.2, pp.26–7 (C. Entwistle)

In the centre of this gold hexagonal openwork pendant with suspension loop is a double-*solidus* of Constantine the Great (306–37), with a profile bust of him on the obverse, and the confronted busts of his two sons Crispus (died 326) and Constantine II (337–40) in imperial costume on the reverse. Inscriptions on the reverse indicate that the coin was struck at the mint of Sirmium (present-day Sremska Mitrovica, in Serbia) in 321. Surrounding the coin are six exquisitely executed tondo busts in high relief. They are (from top right clockwise): a female wearing a tiara and veil; a bearded male; a female with crown tress; a male wearing a Phrygian cap; another female with crown tress; and, finally, a male wearing a fillet.

The pendant is one of five perhaps from the same necklace: a further hexagonal and a circular example are now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC; a second, slightly damaged, circular example is in the Louvre, Paris, and, finally, the largest of them all, an octagonal example is in the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (Deppert-Lippitz 1996, pp.30–60). Despite the care taken in the individualisation of the busts – noticeable in their hairstyles and physiognomy – both their identification and the reconstruction of the iconographical programme behind them has proved elusive. Only one of the above busts, that of Attis with his Phrygian cap, can be identified with any degree of certainty. Dating the pendants has proved equally problematic. A very closely related gold mount in the British Museum, London, was purportedly found with six gold aurei of Constantios II (337–61), leading to a proposal of the middle of the fourth century for the pendant's manufacture (Buckton 1983–84, pp. 15–20). More recently, on the basis of comparisons of the tondo busts with Theodosian metalwork, a date in the later fourth century has been suggested (Ross 2005, pp.147–9 [Boyd]).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

129

Gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints

Egypt (?), 600–50
Gold, 8 × 5.3 cm

Dumbarton Oaks, Washington DC, Byzantine Collection, BZ.1937.24
PROVENANCE: Kunsthandel, Frankfurt 1928; Hackenbroch, Frankfurt; Mr and Mrs Robert Woods Bliss, Washington DC, 1937; Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1940
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rosenberg 1928; Peirce and Tyler 1932, v. 2, p.127, note 27; Werner 1936, p.183; Swarzenski 1941, pp.77–9; Dumbarton Oaks 1955, no.183, p.78, pl.9,2; Wessel 1960, pp.99–104, pl.2, fig.5; Ross 1965, no.13, pp.21–2, pl. 23; Dumbarton Oaks 1967, no.179, p.51; Badawy 1978, p.333; New York 1979, no. 301, p.324; Demisch 1984, pp.295–6, fig.417; Providence 1989, no.52, p.144; Veelenturf 1997, pp.129–31, 134, pl.26; Kelly and Quinn 1999, pp.67, 79, pl.14

This hollow cross was formed first by beating a sheet of gold over a sculpted form, and then soldering it to a flat piece for the back. The assigned date is derived from a technical observation: there is a small triangular flap cut into the rear panel in a technique known from other Late Antique jewellery to provide a vent to allow gases to escape during soldering (Rosenberg 1928, pp.151, 152). The fact that the cross bears a stylistic and iconographic resemblance to another in Cairo (Werner 1936, p.183) has led to a tentative attribution to Egypt.

Christ stands in the centre with arms outstretched, revealing nail holes in his hands and feet. The four holy figures in the medallions on the arms of the cross are not labelled, although the cruciform star on the veil of the woman at the top identifies her as the Virgin. The bearded figure at the bottom is probably John the Baptist. Although Christ may appear to be crucified, given the nail holes and the rectangular sign over his head inscribed IC XC, analysis of certain significant details has shown that the image is more complicated (Wessel 1960, pp.99–104). For example, although there are nail holes, there are no nails. Christ's head is erect and his eyes open. He wears, not the colobion, the long, sleeveless garment of the earliest Crucifixion images from the fifth and sixth centuries, but the tunic and pallium, an ensemble relating to his earliest incarnation as a young teacher or ruler. He is, moreover, youthful and beardless. All of this suggests that the image portrays not Christ crucified, nor again the living Christ, but the eternal Christ, triumphant and bearing the marks of his passion.

JOHN HANSON

130

Chain

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, length of chain 91 cm; length of pendant 2.3 cm; width 3.4 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 879
PROVENANCE: from Kategos, Mytilene, Lesbos
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.327, no.11, fig.1; Athens 1964, no.391, pp.364–65; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.227, p.200 (C. Baltoyanni); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.225, no.2, fig.14; Thessaloniki 2002, no.654, pp.477–8 (E. Meramveliotaki); Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The chain consists of 60 circular links, 1.4 cm in diameter, which are concatenated by figure-eight rings. At one terminal is a hook, while at the other is a pendant, the lower side of which is double-arched, with a pair of leaves hanging from each of the resultant three points. On the front of the pendant is a pierced-work representation of confronted peacocks, on either side of a 'Tree of Life'. This is one of the most popular symbolic representations in Early Byzantine art, and it occurs frequently in jewellery and particularly on lunate earrings in the sixth–seventh centuries (Yeroulanou 1999, nos 488–508, pp.186, 281–3; Baldini Lippolis 1999, nos 2, 4–8, 12–17, 21, pp.104, 105, with bibliography), as well as one pierced-work necklace clasps of the same period (Yeroulanou 1999, p.132, fig.235, nos 62, 65, 66, pp.215–16). However, this type of chain with large links, pendant and the manner of securing it with a hook is rare. The only similar example known is the other chain in the Kategos hoard, BXM 878 (Vavritsas 1954, p.327, no.7, fig.1; Athens 1964, no.390, p.364; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.228, p.201; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.225 no.1, fig.14).

EUGENIA CHALKIA

131

Gold body-chain

Gallo-Roman, late fourth century
Gold, amethyst, garnet, length of individual chains, 37–8 cm; weight 249.5 g.

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1994.4-8.1
PROVENANCE: treasure trove found at Hoxne, Suffolk, 1992
SELECTED REFERENCES: Johns 2003; Johns forthcoming

The body-chain is the largest item of jewellery in the Hoxne treasure. Found in 1992, the complete hoard consists of gold jewellery, silver tableware (chiefly spoons) and around 15,000 gold and silver coins. The two latest coins were issued in AD 407–08, so the entire hoard must have been buried after that date.

Four flat multiple loop-in-loop gold chains with lion-head terminals are joined to form the upper-body decoration passing over the shoulders and under the arms of the wearer, and crossing at the front and back. The decorative junction at the front, permanently linked to one end of each chain, is a roughly oval gold setting for nine gems. Only five gems survive: a cabochon amethyst in the centre and four almond-shaped garnets alternating with four empty circular cells, which may have contained pearls. At the back is another connection, in the form of an octagonal open-backed mount with foliate decoration, set with a *solidus* of Gratian (AD 367–83), minted at Trier. This clasp is a re-used pendant from an older, probably third-century, jewel. Two of the links at the back can be unhooked, so that the chain harness, which would have fitted closely on the torso of its wearer, could be put on and taken off easily.

Body-chains (often known in the literature as 'breast-chains') had a long history in the Ancient Near East and in the Greco-Roman world, but relatively few examples survive. In the Roman period, they were frequently associated in art with nymphs and with Venus and Cupid, and may well have had symbolic values connected with love and, possibly, marriage.

CATHERINE JOHNS

132

Gold belt-buckle

Constantinople, seventh century
Gold, length 7.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1980.7-8.1
SELECTED REFERENCE: Brussels 1982, no.J. 10, p. 205 (D. Buckton)

This gold buckle with a cruciform plate is joined by a hinge to both tongue and loop. The top of the loop is incised with crescent shapes, each with two reserved granules. The tongue is punched on the top with a fret design and under the tip of its tongue with a craftsman's mark. Near the hinge, the plate is chip-carved in an engrailed design in the crescent/granule motif. The rest of the plate is embossed with a Latin cross, the head and arms scalloped and the foot terminating in a roundel. On the back of the plate are four attachment lugs.

The buckle falls into a small but closely related group, all possibly from a Constantinopolitan workshop. The closest comparable example, on both stylistic and technical grounds, is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 2005, no.4F, pp.7–8, pl.x). Although the outline of the plate differs in many respects, the general shape of the tongue and loop, the construction of the hinge, the use of the fret design on the top of the tongue and, on the loop, of incised crescent-shapes with reserved granules are all exactly reproduced. The Dumbarton Oaks buckle has been dated to the first half of the seventh century on the grounds that it may have been found with two *solidi* of Herakleios (610–41) struck at Constantinople between 613 and 630.

Similar decorative motifs – generally consisting of an arrangement of crescents, triangles and dots and known as 'Punkt-Komma' – can be seen on other sixth- or seventh-century AD buckles from, *inter alia*, Hama in Syria (Baltimore 1947, no.468, p.99, pl.LXVI), Mytilene in Greece (Athens 1964, nos 392–3, p.367), and on diverse belt-fittings from Antioch-on-the-Orontes (Ross 1952, pp.31–2, fig. 4).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

133

Gold strap-end

Constantinople, seventh century
Gold, 3 × 2.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1982.5-7.1
SELECTED REFERENCE: András 2000, no. 2, pp.74–5, fig.10

This gold strap-end of hollow-box construction has rounded ends, straight sides and an opening for the strap. The front is embossed and chased in imitation of both granulation and swaged wire, and chased with motifs, including a heart and a crescent with two reserved granules. On the reverse is an embossed trefoil-like plant motif and further geometric ornament.

Belts in the Late Antique period were decorated with numerous fittings, including belt-buckles, tongues and strap-ends: one example from the Mersin treasure in Cilicia, for example, consisted of nineteen individual components (Werner 1974, pl.VII). The above strap-end would have been the terminal for one of the many pendant straps with which such belts were embellished. The popularity of this type, and the ubiquity of the 'Punkt-Komma' decoration employed on it, is attested by numerous finds from outside the borders of the empire: both in high-status Lombardic graves such as at Castel Trosino and Trezzo sull'Adda (Brescia 2000, p.68, fig.44, no.34a, p.70, fig.49, no.39a, pp.85–6 and 88), as well as in Avar graves of similar status at the Hungarian sites of Kunágota, Hatvan-Boldogi pustza, Hernád and Medina (Garam 2001, pp.336–7, pls 85–6). It has been much debated whether these are to be attributed to Constantinopolitan as opposed to provincial workshops, or whether they represent purely local imitations by Lombardic and Avar goldsmiths.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

134

Crossbow fibula

Constantinople (?), *c.*480
Gold, 11.9 × 5.5 × 4 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995 (1995.97)
PROVENANCE: collection Simon Bendel, London, 1964–75; purchase (Michael Ward, Inc.; New York, 1995); purchase, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 1995
SELECTED REFERENCES: Brown 1993, New York 1999, no. 36, pp.30–1 (K. Brown); Yeroulanou 1999, no.175, pp.52, 53, 97, 168, 195, 235, fig.67, Dandridge 2000; Deppert-Lippitz 2000A, Deppert-Lippitz 2000B; Munich 2004, no.302, p.304, (G. Zahlhaas)

This elaborate gold fibula is the largest of its type to survive. The pierced goldwork decoration stresses the importance of Christianity through the face, headplate, decorated with a tall, thin cross rising from acanthus leaves. As often found on liturgical crosses, the Greek letters alpha and omega extend from the cross arm with the tip transformed into a Chi Rho encircled in a triumphal wreath. Acanthus scrolls fill the sides of the extended rectangular face with the sides of the triangular foot decorated with simpler geometric patterns. Gold crossbow brooches like this were symbols of rank used to fasten the cloaks (chlamys) of Byzantine dignitaries, as seen on the attendants of the Emperor Justinian in the mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (fig.1).

Eight related gold fibulae survive whose find sites extend across the Byzantine Empire, including graves of border peoples given Roman rank in exchange for peace and/or military service (Deppert-Lippitz 2000B, pp.56–70). The Metropolitan fibula is similar in its triangular foot to a fibula found at Apahida, Romania, in the grave of Omharus, one of these border figures (New York 1999, no.36, pp.30–1; Deppert-Lippitz 2000B, p.57). The size and weight of the Metropolitan fibula suggest that it was for a person of great importance within the empire or on its borders. While such gold fibulae are exceptional, the construction of the Metropolitan fibula has been shown to be similar to decorated fibula in less precious metals and thus not necessarily a work of an imperial workshop (Dandridge 2000, pp.82–4).

HELEN C. EVANS

135

Bracelet

Eleventh–twelfth century
Silver, repoussé, chased, traces of gilding, niello, 2.2 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.11438
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, p.191, no.202 (L. Bouras); Georgoula 1999, pp.339–40, no.147 (A. Ballian)

This cylindrical bracelet is similar to cat.136, although less wide. The design is compressed and simplified: the rectangular panels have been omitted, the interconnecting roundels have become mere dots and the large almond-shaped motifs are of equal importance to the central roundels.

The main feature of the bracelet is the arabesque-style ornamentation, executed in niello on a silver background and vice versa. Arabesque scrolls and pseudo-Kufic motifs belong to the orientalising repertoire of Byzantine ornamentation and are the two most characteristic features of Islamic art that spread beyond the frontiers of the Islamic world. In Byzantine illuminated manuscripts the various forms of scrolled arabesques were used as decorative designs on furniture, metal objects, articles of everyday use and fabrics such as hems of garments or bedcovers. Sometimes also called vermiculated scrolls, they often appear in architectural decoration and painting, especially in the twelfth century (Pelekanidis et al. 1973, pls 125, 139, 298–9, 308, 311); Megaw and Hawkins 1962, p.336–46, figs 42, 52, 53, 55). At their best they are applied on metalwork, in enamel or niello (New York 1997, no.300, pp.460–1, no.333, p.497).

Similar scrolls in Islamic art are found in jewellery, silverwork and pottery design (Spink 1986, p.28, no.5; Hasson 1987, p.94, no.127; Jenkins 1992; see also cat.136. Some of the few preserved pieces of Islamic silver from Egypt, Iran and Northern Syria demonstrate the same type of scrolled nielloed background (New York 1997, p.409; Marschak 1986, figs 131–2, 138–41; Edinburgh 2006, no.10, p.18, no.14, p.21). This type of bracelet shares many of the same features as a bracelet now in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and originally part of the Sayram Su hoard – including the style of scrolling and nielloed design – which was found with Islamic coins datable to between 949 and 1040 (Allan 1986, p.12, fig.40).

ANNA BALLIAN

136

Bracelet

Eleventh century
Silver, repoussé, chased, partial gilding, niello, 3.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.11457
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, pp.190–1, no.201 (L. Bouras); Georgoula 1999, pp.334–7, no.126 (A. Ballian); Thessaloniki 2002, p.413, no.520 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, pp.136–7, no.95 (A. Ballian); Lisbon 2007, p.191, no. 99 (A. Ballian)

The wide cylindrical bracelet (*perikarpion*) is made up of two sections of equal size, joined by a hinge. Each section is divided into three rectangular panels with a medallion at the centre, framed by four almond-shaped motifs. Smaller medallions are linked to the larger ones, creating a horizontal axis and balancing the arrangement of the panels. Each medallion is decorated with a fine nielloed design of a cross formed by four scrolled, heart-shaped palmettes.

The type of bracelet with rectangular decorative panels decorated with relief roundels and almonds seems to represent a simplified form of Late Antique bracelets, such as those found on Palmyran sculpture. They are embellished with almond-shaped leaves in imitation of gem-studded originals (Mackay 1949, pp.176–7, fig.6a, pls LVII.2, LVIII; Seyrig 1952, p.233, figs 13–15; Lepage 1971, p.7).

The use of scrolling design and the cylindrical shape relate this bracelet to a group of bracelets distinguished by their mixed Byzantine-Islamic decoration of real and imaginary animals, including the Iranian mythical *simurgh*. They are preserved in the Kanellopoulos Museum in Athens, the Dumbarton Oaks Collection in Washington DC, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore and the Louvre, Paris (Netzer 1991, no.166, pp.164–5; Paris 1992, no.253, pp.338–9 [J. Durand]). The Louvre bracelets were part of the Izgirli treasure from Bulgaria, which consisted of plates worked in a similarly mixed Byzantine-Islamic style (Ballian and Drandaki 2003, pp.47–80). The same features occur on one other intact bracelet (cat.135) and on two sections of bracelets in the Benaki Museum, Athens, decorated with griffins and pseudo-Arabic inscriptions in angular Kufic script (Athens 1986, nos 199–200, p.190).

ANNA BALLIAN

137

Bracelets

Sixth–seventh centuries
Gold, diameter 5.5–6.1 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm; diameter 5.5–6.05 cm; width 0.1–0.55 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 882, BXM 883
PROVENANCE: Krategos, Mytilene, Lesbos
SELECTED REFERENCES: Vavritsas 1954, p.327, no.6, fig.1; Athens 1964, no.394, pp.365–6; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.225, p.199 (C. Baltoyanni); Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.182, nos 8–13a; Thessaloniki 2002, no.517, p.411 (E. Meramveliotaki); Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming

The bracelets (*psellia*) are virtually identical, with only minor differences in their dimensions. They comprise a solid band of elliptical shape and varying width. Their curvature decreases significantly, mainly on the upper side of the piece of jewellery, to such a degree that it appears almost straight. At the centre of this side, which is also the thickest point of the *psellion*, a rib is formed, while at the centre of the lower side, which is the thinnest point, is an opening to facilitate fitting the bracelet around the wrist.

The bracelets are of the simplest type of this kind of ornament, which is known from Antiquity but was widely spread during the sixth and seventh centuries (Baldini Lippolis 1999, pp.176–8, 182). The Krategos treasure includes four other bracelets that are exactly the same, while similar ones are encountered in other hoards/treasures of the sixth–seventh century, the best-known being the pair no.J 431 in the Cyprus Museum, Nicosia, from the Lambousa treasure (Athens 1964, no.401, p.368; Pierides 1971, no.8, p.58; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.182, nos 6–7a), and the bracelet no.W 100 from the Mersine treasure, in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Grabar 1951, fig.2.10; Bank 1985, no.102, p.288, D; Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.182, nos 2–5a). Furthermore, there are bracelets of comparable type, with minor deviations in the form of the bar, in various museums (Baldini Lippolis 1999, p.182; Touratsoglou and Chalkia forthcoming).

EUGENIA CHALKIA

138

Pair of bracelets

Fourth or early fifth century
Gold with sapphires and emeralds, diameter 8.5–11.6 cm; 8.7–11.4 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Adolph D. and Wilkins C. Williams Fund, 67.52.31.1/2
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lepage 1971, p.15; Richmond 1994, no.16, pp.68–71; Yeroulanou 1999, no.206, p.241

This pair of bracelets is an important example of pierced-work technique (*diatra*) combined with precious stones. Both hoops are of semicircular cross-section, with a movable part as the fastening. On each bracelet four mounted sapphires alternate with four emeralds.

In the zones above and below the stones are ivy scrolls and the central zone between the stones has two circles with stem and central lozenge enclosing a rosette, as well as a lozenge with scrolls around a vine leaf.

The movable part in the central zone is decorated with lyre-guilloche pattern, while small cruciform leaves fill the ends.

The pierced work is exquisite and these bracelets belong to a group of *diatrita* jewellery which has been worked with a special tool that traces the design from the outset (Buckton 1983–84) so that it is also visible on the back, as, for example, on the medallion of Constantine the Great, in the British Museum, London (inv.no. MLA 1984, 5-1, 1). These pieces of jewellery are associated too with the common ivy scroll, as well as with the characteristic tendrils sprouting from the stem and coiling backwards.

Bracelets of similar shape and technique, that also use precious stones, exist in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Department of Antiquities, inv. no.1977.272) and in the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum, Mainz (inv.no.0.39321).

Other common elements, such as concentric circles and lozenges, lyre-guilloche pattern, rosettes and vine leaf, are encountered on various

pieces of jewellery of the same period. All these suggest that the pieces were produced in one centre or even in the same workshop and were disseminated widely during the fourth and the early fifth century.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

139

Pair of bracelets

Cyprus (?), sixth century
Gold, diameter 9 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 1833–1836
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no. 266, pp. 169–71, pl. 51; Lepage 1971, p. 19, fig. 30; Chatzidakis 1974, p. 376, fig. 7B; New York 1979, no. 297, pp. 321–2; Delvoyrras 1980, pp. 35 and 37, fig. 23; Brussels 1982, no. J 2, p. 198; Brown 1984, p. 5, fig. 3; Metzger 1990, p. 9; Dallas 1990, p. 74, pl. 54; Delvoyrras and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 213, fig. 374; Georgoula 1999, no. 113, pp. 310–11; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 229, p. 245

The bracelets are formed from a hoop of semicircular cross-section, with repoussé decoration of a repeating stem sprouting from a cornucopia. On the movable disc, the same pattern is executed in pierced work around a stellar rosette. The disc is surrounded by a row of relief granules, a plain frame and granulated wire on its circumference.

The movable disc with hinges for fastening is characteristic of this type of bracelet in the fifth and sixth centuries. The hoop is usually formed from a wide band in repoussé (see the bracelet from Constantinople in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC: Ross 1965, no. 2A, pp. 4–6), pierced work (see the bracelet with repoussé figure of the Virgin on the circular movable part and pierced-work decoration on the hoop, in the British Museum, London: Dalton 1901, no. 279, pp. 45–6) or with elements soldered together to create the impression of pierced-work decoration (see the bracelet from the Cyprus treasure: Stylianou and Stylianou 1969, p. 55, no. 20, fig. 43). In certain cases the hoop is covered by mounted precious stones (see the bracelets from Egypt in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: Dennison 1918, nos 28 and 29, pp. 157–9). Contemporary representations show that these bracelets were widely diffused.

The decoration of the bracelets is notable for its technical execution and the rendering of the subject. The designs on the pierced-work surface are clearer than on other examples, and are also enriched with additional repoussé and carved decoration on the disc and the hoop. The stems and the cornucopias thereby acquire a richness very similar to the ones on the cross of Justin II, in the Vatican Museum, dated to 565–78, confirming the dating of the bracelet to the sixth century. The treatment of the decoration is slightly different on each bracelet: on one, perhaps the later, the subjects are less distinct.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

140

Bracelet

Rome (?), fifth century
Gold, 6.8 × 5.9 × 4.6 cm; strap 15.5 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1668)
PROVENANCE: said to be from Tomet, near Assut in Upper Egypt, or from ancient Antinoe on the east bank of the Nile; acquired in Cairo by J. Pierpont Morgan (Dennison 1918, pp. 97–8); gift of J. Pierpont Morgan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1917
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, nos 28–9, pp. 97–101, 157–9; Brown 1993; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 225, pp. 53, 62, 84, 138, 159, 162, 177–9, 195, 244, figs 288, 341; Deppert-Lippitz 2000A; Munich 2004, no. 302, p. 304 (G. Zahlhaas)

The loop and hoop of this bracelet, one of a pair found in Egypt, are elaborately decorated with pierced goldwork, *diatrita*, a technique related to the *opus interasile* of the Roman tradition. The geometric precision of the patterning has been argued to date the work to the fifth century (Yeroulanou 1999, pp. 15–26, 154). The tiny lion head terminals on the hinge-pins for the hoop have been identified as fifth century in style and similar to other works of that date from Fécamp in France, Ténès in Algeria and Reggio Emilia in Italy. The dove pattern too has been related to works found in Ténès and Reggio Emilia, as well as other sites, including the Palatine in Rome (Deppert-Lippitz 2000A, pp. 65–6). A small cross at the centre of the loop opposite the elaborate hoop is the only suggestion that the doves might be meant in a Christian context. While many Early Byzantine bracelets open with hinge-pins, this bracelet is unusual in that the pin works by a screw mechanism, similar to ones on the bracelets at Ténès and Reggio Emilia, and identified as a status symbol, indicative of the aspirations of the owner (Brown 1993).

HELEN C. EVANS

141

Bracelet

Probably from Constantinople, ninth or tenth centuries
Gold and glass, 5.7 × 8.6 × 6.6 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, BKO 262/6a
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pelekanidis 1959; Grabar 1962; Athens 1964, no. 463; Wolbach and Lafontaigne Dosogne 1968, p. 196; Brussels 1982, p. 196; Thessaloniki 1986, pp. 80–82; Hascloff 1990, pp. 31–33; New York 1997, pp. 243–4; Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 411–12

This gold bracelet is one of a pair excavated with a hoard in Thessaloniki. Bracelets were worn on the wrists to hold in place the long, almost floor-length sleeves of fashionable formal garments worn by women in the Middle Byzantine period.

Each bracelet is made from two equally sized, curved trapezoid-shaped plates, linked to one another by slender bars that fit through five small ribbed tubes. The bar in one of these hinges was fixed, while that in the second could be removed in order to undo the bracelet. The plates are bordered at the top and bottom by an overlaid three-strand braid. Each bracelet is covered with twenty panels, which are bordered by granulated bands and decorated with cloisonné enamel. The panels feature representations of, alternately, a bird pecking at a leaf, palmettes and rosettes, rendered in slightly differing colours in each panel. This variation is achieved with the use of white, blue, ultramarine and red glass – and probably also crimson, which now appears black – in different areas in each one.

Given the valuable nature of these pieces of gold jewellery, their subtlety of design and their exquisite craftsmanship, the bracelet is likely to have belonged to a member of the highest social strata of Byzantium.

ANASTASSIOS C. ANTONARAS

142

Bracelet

Constantinople (?), sixth–seventh century
Gold, silver, pearls, amethysts, sapphires, glass, quartz and emerald plasma, diameter 8.2 cm

Lent by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1670)
PROVENANCE: said to be from Tomet, near Assut in Upper Egypt, or from ancient Antinoe on the east bank of the Nile; acquired in Cairo by J. Pierpont Morgan (Dennison 1918, pp. 97–8); gift of J. Pierpont Morgan to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1917
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dennison 1918, nos 28–9, pp. 97–101, 157–9; Brown 1979; New York 1979, no. 300, pp. 323–4 (K. Brown); Brown 1993; Richmond 1994, no. 35, pp. 104–5; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 228, pp. 62–4, 69, 97, 100–2, 127, 154, 161, 177, 195, 245, figs 90, 175; Deppert-Lippitz 2000A; Evans, Holcomb and Hallman 2001

This elaborate bracelet, one of a pair, is decorated with jewels on the exterior of its hoop and loop and elaborate *diatrita*, pierced goldwork, decoration on its inner surface (Yeroulanou 1999, pp. 15–26, 62–4). The pearls and gemstones on the exterior have been associated with similar bracelets worn by the attendants of the Empress Theodora (1055–56) in the mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (fig. 30) and argued to support a Constantinopolitan origin for the work (Brown 1979, pp. 57–62; Brown 1993, p. 89 on the basis of this bracelet's sophisticatedly hidden clasp on the loop). The elaborate *diatrita* patterns on the interior are similar to ones found as the exterior decoration of other works. Related patterns exist on a medallion for a necklace in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, which has been argued to have been produced in Syria, possibly Antioch, as a product of a high-quality provincial workshop (Richmond 1994, no. 35, pp. 104–5). Part of a hoard discovered in Egypt, this bracelet represents the wealth and ambition of its owner to be dressed in styles exported from, or produced in imitation of, those worn in the imperial capital.

HELEN C. EVANS

143

Gold bracelet with a bust of the Mother of God

Eastern Mediterranean, c. AD 600
Gold, depth of hoop 6.7 cm; depth of medallion 4.4 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 331
PROVENANCE: said to have come from Syria; from the Franks Bequest, 1897
SELECTED REFERENCE: Athens 2000, no. 11, p. 292 (C. Entwistle)

This gold bracelet with an openwork hoop and a clasp in the form of a medallion is decorated with a repoussé bust of the Virgin Mary. The Virgin, who wears a himation, raises both hands in the orant position. Flanking the bust are four empty settings for gems or glass pastes. The hoop, which is executed in a technique known as *opus interrasile* (literally 'pierced work'), is composed of two tubes of gold sheet containing a design of a central vase, from which emanate two running scrolls containing pairs of swans and peacocks.

This bracelet stands at the end of a long tradition of Late Antique bracelets with openwork hoops: the *opus interrasile*, which is much less tightly organised than on third- and fourth-century jewellery, is typical of that dating to around the year 600. Similar iconic representations of the Virgin are hard to find on Early Byzantine jewellery. Apart from on the now-lost counterpart for this example, formerly in the collections of the Italian collector and goldsmith, Alessandro Castellani, and Count Tyszkiewicz (Froehner 1897, pp. 74–5, no. 108, pl. 17), the Virgin tended to be depicted either in narrative contexts on gold *enkolpia*, drawn either from the Mariological or Christological cycles, or in schematic form on amulets, rings and pendant crosses.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

144

Gold openwork bracelet

Eastern Mediterranean, fourth century
Gold, diameter 10 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Antikensammlung, inv. no. 30210, 509
SELECTED REFERENCES: Niemeyer 1997, pp. 201–3; Yeroulanou 1999, no. 202

The bracelet was found at Tartus, Syria, together with a counterpart, now in St Louis (Yeroulanou 1999, no. 203). Its convex shape was created by combining eight oblong with sixteen trapezoid plaques in *opus interrasile* with different patterns and the blessing inscription ΕΥΤΥΧΩC ΧΡΩ ΔΙΑ ΒΙΟΥ (use it for [your] luck throughout life). The pair bears the words ΨΥΧΗ ΚΑΛΗ ΥΓΙΕΝΟΥCΑ ΦΟΡΙ (beautiful, healthy soul, wear it).

The *opus interrasile* technique was widespread in the Roman and Early Byzantine Empire from the third to seventh centuries. The typical lace-like effect was created by piercing sheet gold. A broad range of floral, geometric and figural motives, as well as inscriptions, appear on gold jewellery, fibulae, belt buckles or even sword ornaments. The same stylistic development is found in other genres of Early Byzantine art, such as on capitals in the Church of St Sophia, Constantinople (sixth century), with their lace-like effect gained by undercutting the marble surface.

The bracelet can be dated to the fourth century because of its production method: it was made by initially piercing holes into the sheet gold and then widening them with a triangular chisel to create different patterns, which is typical for earlier *opus interrasile*.

Over 600 pieces of gold jewellery in *opus interrasile* have survived. They have been thoroughly catalogued by Aimilia Yeroulanou. Most of the 47 preserved *opus interrasile* bracelets (Yeroulanou 1999, cats 197–235) are closed bangles made from a flat or convex sheet of gold. Nine bracelets feature a decorated disc serving as clasp, while two bracelets are formed by interlocking elements. One piece stands out from the rest in that it consists of two panthers holding a plaque. Many bracelets are also adorned with pearls and precious stones such as emeralds and sapphires. While most openwork bracelets have been passed down as single pieces, eighteen form nine pairs, which suggests that bracelets were normally worn as pairs.

ANTJE BOSSELMANN-RUICKBIE

145

Pectoral cross

Thirteenth–fourteenth century
Gold, lapis lazuli, 4 × 0.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1853
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, p. 174, no. 277; Athens 1986, no. 214, p. 195, (L. Bouras); Athens 1994, no. 80, p. 258 (A. Drandaki); Georgoula 1999, pp. 334–5, no. 132 (A. Ballian); Sydney 2005, no. 97, p. 140 (A. Ballian); Lisbon 2007, no. 102, p. 194 (A. Ballian)

The small cross is of the Resurrection type – with two horizontal bars – and hangs from a double suspension loop. Inset on the front, and projecting from it, is a cross of lapis lazuli held in place by a strip of gold. The weight and the thickness of the cross are due to the lapis lazuli, which is deeply set in a protective case.

The pectoral cross is reminiscent of portable reliquaries containing fragments of the True Cross, which were widespread during the Middle Byzantine period. The way in which the lapis lazuli is inlaid refers to the cruciform openings of reliquaries, through which the sacred relic they contained could be seen.

Engraved on the reverse of the cross is an inscription underlining its protective power and mentioning its owner: +ΟΠΑΟΝ ΓΕΝΟΙΟ ΚΑΙ ΦΥΑΑΞ Ω CT(ΑΥ)ΡΕ ΜΟΥ / ΒΑΡΑ<ΡΑ> ΓΤΟΠΟΥΑ(Ω) CΕΒΑCΤΩ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΩ (O my Cross, become a weapon and guardian for Georgios Varangopoulos Sebastos). The title Sebastos, which derives from the Greek translation of the Roman imperial title Augustus, reappeared in Byzantium in the eleventh century, when, in the context of efforts to strengthen the position of the reigning dynasty, it began to be awarded mainly to kinsmen of the Komnenos family as well as to foreign princes. From the late twelfth century, however, the title was demoted and began to be granted to lower-ranking officials and to leaders of the ethnic groups settled in the Byzantine realm. The name Varangopoulos possibly declares the origin of the owner from the Varangians, the Scandinavian people who played an important role in the military and political history of Byzantium, primarily as mercenaries in the emperor's bodyguard. An Alexios Varangopoulos is recorded as lord of the island of Kos as early as 1258, and another member of the family is mentioned in a document of 1400 as the proprietor of a bath-house opposite the Monastery of the Hodegon in Constantinople.

ANNA BALLIAN

146

Gold ring with *opus interrasile* decoration

Rome, around 300
Gold, diameter 2 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, inv. no. 1917.05-1.987
PROVENANCE: found in the River Tiber, Rome; Louis Moritz Richard Zschille; Sir Augustus Wollaston Franks; given to the British Museum as part of the Franks Bequest, 1897
SELECTED REFERENCES: Riegl 1901, p. 143 and pl. xvi; Marshall 1908, p. 158, no. 987 and pl. xxv; Higgins 1980, p. 184, n. 10 and pl. 64B; Biroli Stefanelli 1992, p. 268, no. 232 and fig. 266

The ring comprises a broad hoop of gold. The central, main element is completely filled with *opus interrasile* (pierced work) decoration of fine, intertwining tendrils, perhaps of acanthus. These form swirls alternating left and right. Both borders of the hoop are formed of plain gold bands, edged with continuous small diagonal incisions.

This technique is first mentioned in the later first century AD by Pliny the Elder (*Natural History*, XII, 94), in the context of wreaths of sacred cinnamon set in pierced gold crowns, dedicated by the Emperor Vespasian (69–79). The earliest surviving examples of pierced-work jewellery date to the second century AD and the technique became popular from the early third, especially for bracelets and pendants. In the following centuries the pierced decoration was increasingly detailed, leaving less of the original gold visible (Biroli Stefanelli 1992, pp. 75–6). The most ornate Roman examples date to the fourth century, and often incorporate medallions or coins of emperors such as Constantine I (306–37) and his family (Biroli Stefanelli 1992, pp. 219–20).

Finds of Roman jewellery in this technique are concentrated largely, though not exclusively, in the Western empire (Britain, France, Germany and Italy), suggesting that the technique originated in the West.

PAUL ROBERTS

147

Finger ring with the Annunciation

Sixth or seventh century
Gold and niello, diameter 1.6 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1830
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no. 261, p. 165, pl. 50; Hadzidakis 1944, no. 79, p. 201; Dallas 1990, p. 71, fig. 30; Georgoula 1999, no. 119, p. 319

The wide polygonal hoop of the ring carries an elliptical bezel with representation of the

Annunciation, in niello. Depicted on each facet of the hoop is a saint in bust.

The type of ring is characteristic of a wedding ring, which the Church Fathers permitted the Early Christians to wear, whereas generally they discouraged adornment with many and expensive pieces of jewellery (Clement of Alexandria, *Patrologia Graeca*, 8, line 633). Represented on the bezel of many examples are the bride and groom being crowned by Christ or the Virgin. The facets of the hoop are decorated with scenes from the Life of Christ (see the Palermo ring found at Syracuse: Hadzidakis 1944, no.81, p.202; one ring in the British Museum, London: Dalton 1901, no.129; and one other in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC: Ross 1965, no.69, pp.58–9). The scene of the Annunciation on the bezel of the Benaki Museum ring could also be correlated with marriage (a similar ring in the Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, has a representation of the Ascension on the bezel: see Baltimore 1980, no.427). The Virgin is shown standing and holding the spindle, with the basket of wool at her feet, while the Archangel stands beside her with outspread wings (the rendering ofthe scene is similar to the ring in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection: Ross 1965, no.69, pp.58–9, pl.XLIV).

It is impossible to identify the figures of saints on the facets of the hoop, as the ring is too small to portray the personal features of each. Nevertheless, the type of ring and the iconography of the subject suggests a dating in the sixth or seventh century and its attribution – along with its counterparts – to Constantinople. This dating is reached mainly from the Palermo ring, which was considered to have belonged to Emperor Constans II (641–68) and, indeed, to have been made especially for his marriage in the Byzantine capital, around 650. The iconographic details add credence to this hypothesis (see Ross 1965, p.59).

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

148

Finger ring with monogram and eagle device

Sixth or seventh century
Gold, diameter 2.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no.1829
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hadzidakis 1944, no.63, p.200; Dallas 1990, p.75, pl.56; Georgoula 1999, no.115, p.314.

The ring comprises a solid cylindrical hoop with circular bezel engraved with a representation of an eagle with uplifted wings. Above the bird's head, which is turned to the left, is the monogram IΩANNOY (of Ioannis). The type of ring and the eagle device combined with monogram are particularly widespread (see Stathatos 1963, no. 227, p.288, pl.XLIV; Ross 1965, no.70, pp.60–1). Fourth-century theologians discouraged adornment with jewellery, but allowed Christians to wear a ring, which could be either a signet ring with the name of the family head or the wedding ring. For the former the use of Christian symbols, such as the fish, anchor or birds, was recommended (Clement of Alexandria, *Patrologia Graeca*, 8, line 633). Over time, the symbols were replaced by monograms, the earliest of which are in the form of a solid rectangle, with the letters combined around the initial, while from the reign of Justinian onwards, monograms of cruciform type prevail (Schlumberger 1884, pp.85ff.).

The Benaki Museum ring can be considered to be a signet ring, even though the letters of the monogram are not in reverse. It is quite possible that it belonged to a consul, as this view has been expressed for all comparable rings with representations of an eagle, which symbolises the power and authority associated with the title (see Ross 1965, p.60). The size of the ring and the combination of the eagle with the masculine monogram not only reinforce this hypothesis, but also corroborate the dating of the piece of jewellery to the late sixth or the early seventh century (Schlumberger 1884, pp.85–7).

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

149

Finger ring with swivel bezel

Sixth–seventh century
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2107
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hadzidakis 1944; Grumel 1947, pp.512–21; New York 1979, no.305, pp.326–27; Nauerth and Warns 1981, pp.53–4; Dallas 1990, p.75, pl.58; Georgoula 1999, no.117, pp.316–17 (C. Mango)

The ring bezel is octagonal, with each of the eight sides slightly indented. On one face is an engraved representation of a standing archangel holding a cross-topped sceptre in the right hand and an object resembling a sphere in the left. Represented on the other face is St Thekla in prayer, flanked by two animals, possibly lions, and two crosses in the field. On the thickness of the bezel are the ciphers ΧΜΓ and /ϛΡΑ, engraved and picked out with niello, which are legible when the face with the archangel device is visible.

This ring has been studied by Manolis Chatzidakis (Hadzidakis 1944) and Cyril Mango (Georgoula 1999, no.117, pp.316–17): the best decipherment of the cipher ΧΜΓ is: Χριστόν Μαρία γεννά (Mary gives birth to Christ) or Χριστός, Μιχαήλ, Γαβριήλ (Christ, Michael, Gabriel).

More difficult to interpret is the cipher /ϛΡΑ, which is also found on a gold casket reliquary in the British Museum, London (Dalton 1911, p.544, fig.332), on which is also represented a cross on stepped base, with these three letters as finials on the arms. Chatzidakis interprets the letters as a date, but Mango, following Grumel (Grumel 1947, p.520) thinks the significance was to be apotropaic as the number corresponds to the numerical value of the inscription: Η βεβαία σωτηρία και αποστροφή πάντων των κακών (True salvation and aversion of all evils) which frames the cross.

The figure of St Thekla and the ciphers suggest that the ring came from the eastern part of the empire, possibly Syria or Cilicia. The ring is dated to the sixth or seventh century as the stepped base of the cross with the letters first appears on coins of Tiberios II (578–82) and is formed on many coins from the seventh century.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

150

Gold and niello marriage-ring

Eastern Mediterranean, sixth or seventh century
Gold, niello, diameter of hoop 2.3 cm; diameter of bezel 1.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 231
SELECTED REFERENCE: London 1994, no.106, pp.98–9 (C. Entwistle)

This gold finger-ring has an octagonal hoop and bezel. On the bezel are the standing figures of Christ and the Mother of God placing wedding crowns on the heads of a bridegroom and bride respectively. Beneath the figures is the Greek word for 'Harmony' (OMONOIA). Both the inscription and the figures are inlaid with niello – a silver sulphide compound commonly employed as a decorative inlay on rings of this type.

The hoop is similarly inlaid with seven scenes from the Christological cycle, beginning from the right-hand side of the bezel: the Annunciation to the Virgin, the Visitation, the Nativity, the Baptism, the Adoration of the Magi, the Crucifixion and, finally, the Angel at the Sepulchre. Most unusually the craftsman has put two of the scenes from the life of Christ in the wrong order: the Adoration of the Magi should of course precede the Baptism.

The tradition of giving rings at the marriage ceremony was an ancient one: in the Roman period it was referred to as the *dextrarum iunctio* (the joining of the right hands). Marriage-rings were worn on the *annularius*, the third finger of the left-hand, as it was believed that this contained a sinew which connected directly to the heart.

The octagonal shape of the hoop and bezel was supposed to have had an amuletic function. The sixth-century physician Alexander of Tralles recommended rings of this type as a prophylactic for colic.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

151

Gold ring with monogram

Constantinople (?), thirteenth–fifteenth century
Gold, diameter 2.65 cm; length of bezel 1.13 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 271
PROVENANCE: from the Franks Bequest, 1897
SELECTED REFERENCE: London 1994, no.215 (C. Entwistle)

This gold finger-ring has a hollow fluted hoop and shoulders, and an octagonal bezel. The shoulders are decorated with a band of chevrons, the bezel with a cruciform monogram enclosed by an octagonal border.

A Late Byzantine date for this ring is suggested both by the shape of the hoop and bezel as well as the style of monogram. A close parallel in the Stathatos Collection, Athens (Coche de la Ferté 1957A, pp.401–1, fig.30) was part of a group of jewellery, including two bracelets and eleven other rings, said to have been found near Thessaloniki with coins of Isaac II Angelos (1185–95) and Alexios III Angelos (1195–1204). Rings of this form, dating to the last quarter of the fourteenth or first half of the fifteenth century, can also be seen in Western Europe, particularly on French papal rings (Dalton 1912C, no.883).

Dalton resolved the monogram as 'Manuel' (Dalton 1901, no.171, p.27) and attributed the ring to Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425). Although there is no alpha or upsilon among its constituent letters (M.N.H.A), this suggestion is not entirely implausible given the abbreviated nature of Late Byzantine monograms. More recently a parallel has been drawn between this ring and an example in the Benaki Museum, Athens (cat.152), which is similarly decorated with a cruciform monogram but also encircled by the inscription: ΤΟΥ ΕΥΜΟΡΦΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (of the Eumorphopouloi) (New York 2004, no.15, pp.45–6). The Eumorphopouloi were an aristocratic family from Mistra, the capital of the Morea in the Peloponnese, and it has been suggested that this ring belonged to the despot of Morea, Manuel Kantakouzenos (1349–80). Both interpretations should be treated with caution. Manuel was after all not that uncommon a name in this period and the ring, if it had an imperial connection, lacks any reference to title or status, which would be expected.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

152

Finger ring

Fourteenth century
Gold, diameter 2.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11839
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1986, no.215, p.195; Thessaloniki 1997A, no.290, p.236 (A. Drandaki); Thessaloniki 2002, no.581, p.442 (A. Drandaki)

This inscribed signet ring is made of a single piece of gold. The hoop widens on the shoulders to end in a circular bezel with a flat surface organised by stippled lines in two concentric circles. At the centre is a cruciform monogram, while in the outer circle is the inscription, engraved in reverse: +ΤΟΥ ΕΥΜΟΡΦΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ (of Eumorphopoulos). The reverse inscription of the name, which is repeated also on the monogram, confirms the ring's use as a seal. A noble family by the name of Eumorphopoulos is known from the area of Mystras after 1453 (Μεγάλη Ελληνική Εγκυκλοπαίδεια, vol.11, p.970).

This type of ring, with a flat circular bezel and wide shoulders, is typical of jewellery during the Palaiologan period. A ring in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, is of the same shape and has a similar layout on the bezel, with a monogram in the middle, most probably of the Palaiologos family, and inscription in the outer circle (Ross 1965, no.129, p.90). The same features are encountered on the gold ring of Paxenos Apelates in the Cabinet des Médailles, Paris (Paris 1992, p.338, no.252) and of Constantine Palaiologos and Theodora in the Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens (Athens 2001, p.123, no.48), while examples of the same type of ring also exist in humbler materials, such as silver and copper alloys (Thessaloniki 2002, p.442, no.580; Munich 2004, p.332, nos 676, 678).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

153

Earrings

Fourth century
Gold and glass paste with emeralds and cornelians, height 4.2 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.1672
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no.137, pp.102–3, pl.33; Dallas 1990, pp.68–9, fig.27; Georgoula 1999, no.107, pp.296–7

The hook holds a small quadrilateral mount of gold leaf, inlaid with glass paste and with a soldered palmette frame. From the mount hang a wide pierced-work and carved vine leaf, flanked by filigree stems terminating in tiny ivy leaves; three cornelians set in mounts interlinked by gold wire; three pendent emeralds, of which only the middle one is preserved on each earring.

The palmette frames, common on coin mounts around the third century BC, are sometimes executed in pierced work and sometimes formed as carved bands soldered to the edge of the mounts, as here. Corresponding frames are common too on third- and fourth-century earrings with rosette and mounted stone, from which hang pendants strung on wire or mounted with smaller stones (see earrings in the Stathatos Collection: Stathatos 1963, no.213, p.286, pl.XLIII [A. Orlandos]). The difference is that on the Benaki Museum earrings the pendent elements are more elaborate and the rendering of the decoration is more naturalistic.

Although the vine leaf as the symbol of Dionysos has led some to date these earrings to Antiquity, a later and Christian date appears more likely. For example, there is a pair of necklace plaques, one of which bears a monogram and the other a vine leaf. The juxtaposition of a X monogram and a vine leaf in a pair of plaques of the same necklace (see Buckton 1983–84, figs 3, 4) indicates perhaps that the vine leaf has also a Christian symbolism, drawn from the Gospel text 'I am the vine' (see Buckton 1983–84, figs 3, 4). On the basis of the technique of the pierced-work decoration, the plaques are dated to the fourth century. Consequently, taking into consideration the similarity in the treatment of the leaves, the earrings discussed here can be dated confidently to the same period. This view is reinforced by the presence of tiny ivy leaves, which are encountered on many examples, mainly from the fourth century onwards. Given that the decorative subjects of most earrings in later times had Christian symbolism (see Yeroulanou 1999, nos 475–629, pp.180–8), it is reasonable to assume an analogous content for the vine leaves on the Benaki Museum earrings.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

154

Earrings

Antinoe, Egypt, fifth century
Gold with sapphires and pearls, height 9 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.1779
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no.224, p.143, pl.43; Georgoula 1999, no.111, p.307

Each earring comprises an arched wire for suspension, from which hang two snakes forming a figure of eight. A pearl is strung on the upper circle, while a large sapphire on an arched wire hangs from the lower. The shape and the colour of the stones links these earrings with the necklace from Antinoe, Egypt (cat.123). In form they have characteristics in common with two pairs of earrings from the Piazza della Consolazione treasure, now in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1965, no.1 and G, p.2). They also display an affinity with the earrings from the Carthage treasure in the British Museum, London (Tait 1986, p.98, pl.220). Moreover, analogous pendent elements strung with precious stones are frequently observed in contemporary representations, such as in the portrait of the wife of Consul Stilicho in the consular diptych from Monza or of Empress Theodora in the mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna (fig.30).

The early dating of the earrings is bolstered by the presence of snakes, which in the Early Byzantine period continued to appear as a nuptial symbol (Segall 1938, p.163). The important jewellery-producing centres in Antioch and Egypt preserved a common tradition, the Hellenistic elements of which were spread by craftsmen invited from these regions to work in all reaches of the empire, thus contributing to the formation of the international character evident in Early Byzantine jewellery.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

155

Earrings

Fifth–sixth century
Gold with sapphires, pearls and glass, height 9.7 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1807

PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, no. 240, p. 154, pl. 45; Dallas 1990, p. 70, fig. 29; Georgoula 1999, no. 112, pp. 308–9

Hanging from the hook of each earring is a triangle of granulated wire, enclosing a mesh of shield-motifs (*peltai*) with one pearl. Attached to the sides of the triangle is wire strung with beads, while from its base hang pendants with circular mounts set with glass paste, no longer preserved in most. Strung on the central rod is a large sapphire.

These earrings combine early features such as the pendants with the characteristic mounts for inlaid stones, with innovative decorative motifs, such as the mesh of *peltai* or the wire strung with stones surrounding the triangle. Specifically, the *peltai*, a common subject in *opus interrasile* in the third century AD, lived on as an ornament in later periods, executed in wire, as for example on a necklace from Cyprus (New York 1979, no. 285, p. 311) or on a necklace pendant from Egypt. The decoration of the latter is enriched with stones and pearls strung on metal rods, corresponding to those on the Benaki Museum earrings (Dennison 1918, no. 11, pl. XXXI). The very wide dissemination of the *peltai* motif in other artistic genres too is attested by its frequent use in architectural decorative patterns, such as on the silver *missorium* of Theodosios in Madrid, or in the mosaics of the Rotunda at Thessaloniki (Grabar 1966A, pls 83 and 351).

Earrings, more than any other kind of jewellery, repeated certain established types, such as the rosette with pendent rods in the third and fourth centuries (see Thessaloniki 1997A, nos 158, 159, 163–8) and the lunate earrings in the sixth and seventh centuries (see cats 157, 158). The Benaki Museum earrings are sophisticated artistic creations, the workmanship of which excellently combines opulence of materials with originality of composition.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

156

Gold earring with pearls and enamel

Eastern Mediterranean, tenth or eleventh century
Gold, with pearls and enamel, 6.6 × 3.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PAF 1983.5-2.1
SELECTED REFERENCE: Buckton forthcoming

This golden earring exemplifies the quality and expense of the highest-quality jewellery that was available to the Byzantine élite in the tenth to eleventh centuries. Its hollow teardrop shape is finely decorated with three pearls which are attached by narrow gold rods, and a cloisonné enamel. This has a small floral motif, in blue, green and red, against a white ground. The enamel is attached to the earring by a collet; an empty collet for a second enamel survives on the reverse of the earring. The pendant hangs from a hinged gold ear loop. The technique of the enamel suggests that the earring was probably made in the tenth or eleventh century. It probably came from Byzantium, but significant pieces of gold and enamel jewellery have been found in Kievan Rus' (for example Ross 2005, no. 201).

ANTONY EASTMOND

157

Earrings

Seventh century
Gold, height 4.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 1810
SELECTED REFERENCES: Segall 1938, nos 243, pp. 155–6; Chatzidakis 1974, p. 376, fig. 7; Dallas 1990, p. 70, fig. 28; Georgoula 1999, no. 121, pp. 323–5 (A. Yeroulanou); Yeroulanou 1999, no. 582, p. 294

These lunate pierced-work earrings are decorated at the centre with a stippled band describing a circle, which is divided horizontally into two semicircles. Represented in the upper semicircle are the confronted heads of two birds and part of their wings, while in the lower part is an incised design, analogous to that which is usual in depictions of amphorae and in jewellery, such as on the tiny amphora pendants on two necklaces from the second Cyprus treasure (Brown 1984, pls 12, 14, 15). However, here there is probably a representation of a nest from which the two birds project. This hypothesis is strengthened by the curved leaves of stippled band framing the circle and each enclosing one cinquefoil palmette of the type also encountered frequently on jewellery of this period (Brown 1984, pls 12, 14, 15). The composition is defined by a plain band, soldered to the lower side of which, on the front and back, is incised cord. The edge is decorated with five globules, one of which is missing.

Lunate earrings are usually decorated with the representation of two confronted birds, with a symbolic element between them (Yeroulanou 1999, nos 488–558, pp. 281–91). On the Benaki Museum pair there is the tendency towards a more naturalistic rendering of the scene. The nest amidst foliage recalls the corresponding scene on the two discs of the necklace in Mainz, on which birds nesting in trees are represented (Brown 1984, pl. 1, 3).

The relation of the earrings to jewellery from the Mytilene treasure, such as the belt end with a representation of heraldic peacocks, as well as the subtle way in which the different elements are rendered – a feature of later examples – led to the fairly confident conclusion that the Benaki Museum earrings date from the second quarter of the seventh century.

AIMILIA YEROULANOU

158

Earrings

Constantinople (?), seventh or eighth century
Gold, 6.8 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. Π227 a-b
SELECTED REFERENCE: Yeroulanou 1999, no. 586, p. 295, pl. 188

The flat surface of these lunate earrings is divided in three zones. The two inner ones are covered by highly stylised vine-branches, the grapes of which are rendered by punctured dots. The other zone has punctured and perforated zig-zag patterns. On the outer border nine globules stand out.

The stylisation of the grapes, the preference for punctures instead of granules and the restriction of the perforation to only a small part of the surface fits with a date around 700.

CONSTANTINE SCAMPAVIAS

159

Tapestry shawl with vase and vine with figures

Egypt, fourth or fifth century
Linen and wool, 23 × 17.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7127
SELECTED REFERENCES: Apostolaki 1932, p. 118; Apostolaki 1942–44; Marangou 1971, p. 16

This tapestry shawl decoration has been woven in the form of a vine sprouting from a vase. The tapestry is mainly dark blue, but a few details are in orange, red and green wool. The vase is a kantharos with a triangular stem, a gadrooned body in yellow, handles with a volute and a scroll motif around the neck base. The plant has two main branches opening out into thinner branches and forming a symmetrical pattern. Four red and black grapes (one missing) hang from the stems, which form five compartments, four bearing an animal and the central one a figure. Beside the main stem are two confronted goats with short horns. Two birds perch among branches. In the middle is a purple *eros* walking to the left but with his head turned back. He has large eyes and curly hair. He carries a small sickle in his raised right hand.

The vase containing a plant is a common motif on Egyptian textiles of the Byzantine period. It is often repeated in a symmetrical arrangement and on a small scale as decoration on tunics. On this fragment the presence of a sickle in the hand of the *eros* indicates that the scene is also related to the vintage. The image and the cult of the vine had existed since Pharaonic times and the syncretism between Osiris, god of the dead and 'master of wine', and Dionysos was well established in the Ptolemaic period. Nevertheless, the models for this type of textile come from the Greco-Roman world. The vine and *erotes* are often represented on floor mosaics. Vintage scenes are also found on third-century century pagan and fourth-century Christian sarcophagi. In the pagan world, the vine and wine symbolise the hope of a new life after death, and this symbolism was also adopted by the Christian world.

ROBERTA CORTOPASSI

160

Resist-dyed panel showing the Nativity

Fifth–sixth century
Dyed linen, 47 × 95.5 cm
Inscribed: MAPIA

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
PROVENANCE: gift of Dudley B. Myers, 1900
SELECTED REFERENCE: Wilkinson 1996, pp. 48–9

The Mother of God, veiled and haloed, reclines on a seemingly well-padded couch. On the left side of the textile is an angel, hand extended in speech or greeting, and between the two is a cross or star. On the right side, in a damaged area, details of the ox and ass are just visible above a raised crib.

This iconography fits with early Eastern traditions of the Nativity found in several Early Christian apocryphal texts, in which angels attended the birth rather than just appearing to shepherds in the fields. The Virgin's couch and pose is reminiscent of scenes of Roman matrons. The way in which the scene is shown, with its rectangular picture plane and the use of a spiral column at the far left to mark the edge of the scene, is similar to the portrayal of images of sarcophagi, that of Junius Bassus for example.

The textile is Egyptian, found in Akhmîm in Upper Egypt. The image was produced by being block-printed with the resist (possibly wax) before being dipped in an indigo dye. It is one of a series of textiles from Akhmîm and Antinoe crudely printed, but vigorous and expressive.

LIZ JAMES

161

Fragment of a shawl

Egypt, Fayum, ninth–tenth century
Wool with tapestry bands of wool and linen, 74 × 91.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 15608
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1980, p. 23, no. 62; Paris 1998, no. 191, pp. 206–7 (A. Ballian); Vienna 1998, no. 221, pp. 208–9 (A. Ballian); Athens 2001, no. 154, p. 289 (A. Ballian)

This large black fragment of a shawl is attributed to Fayum, an important weaving centre of Coptic Christianity situated in Upper Egypt. After the Islamic conquest, Coptic textile output did not dramatically alter, technically or stylistically, although it gradually adapted to the needs and taste of the new ruling Muslim élite.

Characteristic features of the Fayum shawls are the horizontal decorative tapestry bands of varied size woven of polychrome wool and linen and decorated with inscriptions and highly stylised figures (Cornu 1992, pp. 486–99; Cornu and Martiniani-Reber 1993, pp. 138–55). The band above the fringes consists of a typical Fayumi pseudo-Kufic inscription (probably repeating the combination of alif – lam, for the world of Allah) with vertical shafts terminating in triangles. The highly ornamented Kufic inscription surrounding the top band, above and below in mirror image, is in a similar style. It probably reads: 'and good fortune, and health, and entire victory'. Other common designs are the double volutes motif and the rows of pearled hexagons enclosing quadrupeds or birds in a style reminiscent of the sumptuous silk fabrics. In the second band the medallions show a human figure and a bird with a ribbon floating from his neck in the Sasanian manner. The overall stylisation, and especially that of the human figure, is characteristic of Coptic fabrics from Upper Egypt.

The area of the Fayum is attested by early Muslim writers as specialising in the weaving of woollen fabrics. One of the main towns Bahnasa (the Hellenistic Oxyrhynchos) was particularly famed for its curtains and wall-hangings as well as for the numerous private and public *tiraz* workshops. The evidence of literary sources is confirmed by the survival of several inscribed pieces, some of them bilingual – Arabic and Coptic. One of these, recently deciphered, specifies that the town of Tutun (Tebtynis) housed an important private workshop to which several shawls showing similar Arabic epigraphy can be attributed (Durand and Rettig 2002, pp. 167–70).

ANNA BALLIAN

162

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, late tenth–twelfth century
Bone, carved and black organic material, 15.6 × 6.2 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10738
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: Argyriadi 1991, fig. 31; Thessaloniki 2002, no. 675c; Ballian 2006, no. 66, p. 73

This female figurine is shaped from a single piece of bone with two attached pieces that form two arms. The basic anatomical details are achieved by simple linear carvings that synoptically define the figure. The nose and ears are carved out in relief. The rest of the details of the face and the body are painted with black material, possibly ink, using designs in the shape of scrolls, dots and heart-shaped and circular motifs. The decoration is confined to the front; the back is plain.

Related figurines in other collections (Paris 2000A, no. 266ab, p. 216) have almost identical decoration and thus form a small group of such statuettes which are more elaborate than most of the so-called 'Coptic dolls' frequently found in Egypt (see cat. 164). All appear to be naked and the markings indicate jewellery or body decorations. Although the function of these small-scale sculptures is not certain, the painted designs suggest a comparison with figural painting of the Fatimid period on paper or lustre pottery. A rare example of such a drawing in the Israel Museum of Art, Jerusalem, depicts a female musician with many similarities to the figurines, such as the scalloped hair, the long curls, the almond-shaped eyes, the body markings and the decoration on the hands and the feet. The most striking connection, however, is the use of two asymmetrical signs on the cheeks which appear consistently on the bone figurines, as well as on the drawing.

The study of this enigmatic drawing has produced a number of explanations as to its purpose, whether as an illustration of a scientific manuscript, a personification of a calendar month (Hoffman 2000, pp. 40–4), or a loose design of a figure with tattoos (Rice 1958), whose use in the Near East dates from Antiquity and continued into the Islamic era with various meanings, including prophylactic or therapeutic reasons.

MINA MORAITOU

163

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, tenth–twelfth century
Bone, carved and black organic material, 11.2 × 2.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10741
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCE: unpublished

The figurine is shaped out of a single piece of bone with the basic body features formed by simple horizontal incisions and the details painted with a black organic material. It appears to be nude with the breasts and the navel defined by simple circles; the chest bears a heart-shaped motif. The decoration is very schematic and confined to the front; the back is left plain and unrefined. Holes on the sides indicate that the figurine is missing two movable arms.

Details of the face, such as the scalloped hair, the long curls and the almond-shaped eyes, adhere to familiar characteristics of figural representation on Islamic works of art, as on textiles (Ballian 2006, no. 12, p. 47) and lustre ceramics (Ballian 2006, no. 12, p. 29). These features cover a broad chronological period from the ninth century, as in the Abbasid paintings of the city of Samarra (Hertzfeld 1927, pl. 1), to the twelfth century, as in the painted ceiling of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo, which is executed in the Fatimid style (Grube and Johns 2005, pl. 34, p. 70). These figures, however, are rarely unclothed. This bone figurine is a simplified version of the group of such statuettes that appear to be nude, and their characteristics are defined by elaborate painted as opposed to carved designs (see cat. 162).

MINA MORAITOU

164

Figurine

Fatimid, Egypt, ninth–eleventh century
Bone, carved and black pigment, 16 × 4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10733
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: unpublished

This female figurine is shaped out of a single piece of bone with the facial features and body details formed by simple geometrical carvings and enhanced by black organic material. The decoration is confined to the front; the back is plain. Holes on the sides of the figurine indicate missing elements such as two movable arms and earrings held by the two holes at the ears, as in other examples in museum collections (Argyriadi 1991, nos 34, 35). The head was covered with a black organic filling to indicate hair or to hold locks of real hair (Paris 2000A, no. 267).

A number of these figurines have been unearthed in Egypt and are dated throughout a broad period according to other finds or architectural evidence (Scanlon 1968, pp. 16–17). A figurine with very similar features was excavated at Fustat and dated to the ninth century (Scanlon and Kubiak 1971, plate XVII/2). The function of these objects has not been thoroughly studied and is therefore uncertain. They share some characteristics which lead to the belief that they were common everyday objects made in large numbers: their frequent occurrence, their simple carving with little artistic value, and the use of bone, a cheaper and more accessible material than ivory. They have usually been associated with the Christian population of Egypt, continuing a pre-Islamic tradition of statuettes which survive in a variety of materials; a number are associated with toys and have been unearthed from children's tombs (Rutschowscaya 1986, p. 86). However, it is likely that certain types were also used in an Islamic context as their decoration is often comparable to works of art associated particularly with the Fatimid period, when figural representation was profuse (see cats 162, 163).

MINA MORAITOU

165

Child's tunic with a hood

Egypt, sixth–eighth century
Wool, 65 × 83 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 7160
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2001, p. 286; Tsourinaki 2002

Perfectly preserved, this warm and soft tunic was a kind of coat worn on top of a linen tunic. It is woven in one piece, the sleeves with the body of the tunic. The hood is woven separately and sewn to the neck opening. After weaving, the two side edges of the garment were sewn together but left open at the armpits.

The technical features indicate a high standard of weaving. It is a perfect example of the way tunics were normally woven during the Byzantine period in Egypt. It is simply decorated with long *clavi* and double sleeve bands. The tapestry pattern is designed in purple wool on light ground. It has wave crest borders and a row of stylised side-viewed birds and fishes. The hood is decorated with a fringe and two roundels with a stylised lion. Hoods still sewn belong mostly to child tunics in linen or in wool.

A tunic kept in the Louvre, Paris (Rouen 2002, no. 77, p. 119), is so similar to the Benaki tunic that it is highly likely they were both made in the same workshop.

ROBERTA CORTOPASSI

166

Pair of child's sandals

Egypt, fifth–seventh centuries
Stamped leather, 12.8 × 5.1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2859
SELECTED REFERENCES: Thessaloniki 2002, p. 112, no. 105 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, p. 102, no. 63 (A. Drandaki)

The leather sandals are decorated with stamped concentric circles and crosses. The soles are well worn, indicating everyday use, in contrast to other examples made of vegetal fibres and with shoddier workmanship, perhaps made for funerary purposes. Numerous items of footwear have been found in graves in Egypt, where the dry climate favoured the preservation of organic materials such as textiles, wood and leather. Several pairs of leather sandals of adults have been found in Antinoe and Fayum (London 1997, nos 327–9; Paris 2000A, no. 129 [F. Calament-Demerger]; Bowman 1986, p. 115, fig. 68; Russo 2004, pp. 188–97, pls VI–XI). However, this type of sandal was not exclusive to Egypt (Driel-Murray 2001). An example of similar craftsmanship, dated from the fifth to the seventh centuries, has been unearthed during recent excavations in Yeni Capi (Istanbul 2007, pp. 223, 278, fig. 12, no. V41).

The stamped motifs on the sandals seem to have been commonly used to decorate footwear (Driel-Murray 2001). Comparable motifs are repeated on the sole of a bronze lamp which realistically reproduces a left sandalled foot, also in the Benaki Museum (Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 184, fig. 313). In general, concentric circles were a popular and widespread motif on all manner of works in Late Antiquity. They occur on jewellery, combs, bone carvings and metal vessels, and their popularity is perhaps linked with an apotropaic function (Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp. 5–7). The decoration of footwear with protective motifs was sometimes reinforced by inscriptions wishing the owner good health (Russo 2004, pp. 194–7, pl. XI; Istanbul 2007, p. 277, no. Y39).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

167

Comb with personifications of Rome and Constantinople

Alexandria (?), second half of the sixth century
Ivory, 16.3 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10487
PROVENANCE: Egypt, purchased from the antiquities dealer Daguerre in Paris, 10 October 1925
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 30, pp. 106–7 (A. Karakatsani); Volbach 1976, no. 88b, p. 68, pl. 30; Brussels 1982, no. I.3, p. 92 (L. Bouras); Cutler 1984a, pp. 36, 61, pl. 11; Buhl 1993, pp. 156–7, figs 81–2; Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 177, figs 301–2; Thessaloniki 2002, no. 631, pp. 462–3 (I. D. Varalis); Varalis 2002

This rectangular ivory comb is decorated with low-relief and engraved decoration on both sides. The central core is bordered by sets of teeth, thick and spaced at one end and fine and dense at the other. The personifications of Rome and of Constantinople, seated under ciboria, occupy each side of the core: Rome is rendered as a helmeted Amazon holding a spear and a globe, and Constantinople has a turreted crown on her head and holds a torch and a cornucopia. Both thrones have a tall back, a cushion on the seat and a footstool.

Though made of ivory, the comb displays the typical features of wooden compact combs from Coptic Egypt (see Caillet 1985, no. 51, pp. 112–13 and Wulff 1909, no. 288, p. 94, pls IX–X). The portrayal of the goddess Roma and the Tyche of Constantinople make the comb unique of its type. Although the iconographic features of the two deities derive from the late fourth or early fifth century, like the silver statuettes of the Esquiline treasure (Rome 2000A, no. 114, pp. 491–3), certain details point to a date in the later part of the sixth century: the ciboria are similar to those of a comb in the Coptic Museum, Cairo, and a pyxis in the British Museum, London (Volbach 1976, nos 204 and 167 respectively). Moreover, the technical and stylistic affinities with a lid of a bone pyxis found on the floor of a house at Alexandria, dated to the later sixth and the first half of the seventh century (Rodziewicz 1984, pp. 243–5, fig. 169; Rodziewicz 1998, p. 143, fig. 6), suggest that the comb is a product of the ivory and bone workshops of the city (Varalis 2002). This artefact of daily use, whose ornamentation is inspired by imperial insignia, may have had a special symbolism in its use as a marriage gift or a burial offering for a distinguished member of Alexandrian society.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

168

Comb with marine deities

Alexandria (?), sixth century
Ivory, 14.5 × 8.25 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 10286
SELECTED REFERENCES: Volbach 1976, no. 88c, p. 68, pl. 49; Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, p. 177, fig. 300

This rectangular ivory comb is decorated in low-relief and engraved decoration on both sides. The central core is bordered by sets of teeth, thick and spaced at one end and fine and dense at the other. A pair of nude marine deities is represented on either side: on the front, a half-reclining Nereid tries to swim away from a bearded Triton carrying a torch; on the rear, a young Triton holds the thigh of a Nereid who spreads her arms in order to balance on his lap. The nude Nereids have only a scarf waving above their heads. The Tritons have athletic human chests and trifid fish tails. The waves in the sea are undulating engraved lines.

Nereids, the daughters of Nereus and Doris, are carried on the surface of the sea by sea-monsters and Tritons (Plato, *Kritias*, 116e; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2, 11–14); their role as saviours of navigators and shipwreckers is well known (Sophocles, *Philoctetes*, 1470–71; Euripides, *Helen*, 1584–87; see Icard-Gianolio and Szabados 1992). Marine deities, represented in syncretistic and iconographically eclectic ways, are widespread in metal objects of everyday life in aristocratic milieux, such as the silver Projecta Casket in the British Museum, London (cat. 12), a silver plate in the Benaki Museum, Athens (Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, pp. 180–1, figs 307, 309) and a bronze tripod in the Louvre, Paris (Baratte 1976). Nereids and Tritons are popular in bone and ivory carvers' workshops in Egypt during Greco-Roman times and Late Antiquity (Marangou 1976, pp. 42–3, 81–2). The Benaki comb displays the typical features of compact combs made of wood and ivory (see cat. 167 and Volbach 1976, no. 88a), and its imagery finds affinities with a bone plaquette in the Archaeological Museum, Split (Marangou 1976, pl. 47b), and several bone plaquettes inlaid into wooden caskets (Marangou 1976, p. 44 and nos 173–5, pp. 81, 118, pl. 51; see also Elderkin 1926). This comb may have had a special symbolism as a marriage gift or a burial offering for a distinguished lady in Alexandrian society.

IOANNIS D. VARALIS

169

Small amphora

Egypt, fifth century
Copper alloy cast in parts, with incised and punched decoration, height 22.2 cm; side of base 8.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 11602
PROVENANCE: Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: Thessaloniki 2002, pp. 469–70, no. 642 (A. Drandaki); Sydney 2005, p. 104, no. 66 (A. Drandaki)

This small amphora with a pointed base is set in a tripod stand decorated with punched concentric circles and relief animal busts. The handles are in the form of felines, while on the lid is an eagle bearing a cross on its head and standing on a highly schematic bull's head. The neck of the amphora is decorated with herringbone pattern and the belly with incised vine branch and a band of geometric motifs, while the pointed base forms a multilobe calyx.

One other example with the same decoration and an identical finial is in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Paris 2000A, no. 263 [O. V. Osharina]), while similar vessels have been identified in the royal tombs of Nubia and the collections of the former Kaiser Friedrich Museum (now the Bode Museum) in Berlin, the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, and the Louvre, Paris (Wulff 1909, no. 1034; Hayes 1984, no. 195; Török 1988, pp. 107, 152–3, pls 56, 67, 129.26; Bénazeth 1992, nos E 11799, E 14210, E 11698, pp. 61–3).

The abundance of comparable examples, all of Egyptian provenance, documents that this type of vessel was very popular in the period. They were most probably used for perfumes and belong to a long tradition of similar miniature vessels with the same purpose. Ancient examples are known too, made of silver as well as of humbler materials, such as clay, while amphorae of glass and wood are preserved from Roman and Late Roman times (Strong 1966, p. 103; Von Bothmer 1984, no. 107; Rutschowscaya 1986, pp. 37–39, nos 39–43; Stern 1995, nos 65–8; Stern 2001, nos 98–101; Lisbon 2007, p. 107, no. 50 [A. Ziva]). The decorative elements of the eagle with cross, the felines, the vine branch and the concentric circles are motifs that appear constantly on diverse Roman objects, while they are repeated unchanged on numerous products of Egyptian copper-work of the Byzantine period.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

5 At Church

170

Chandelier (*choros*)

Thirteenth–fourteenth century
Cast copper alloy, diameter 350 cm; height (without hangings) *c.* 465 cm

Archäologische Staatssammlung, Munich
PROVENANCE: unknown
SELECTED REFERENCES: Munich 1998, no. 98, pp. 97–100 (C. M. Reginek); Paderborn 2001, p. 59, fig. 7; New York 2004, no. 60, p. 125 (A. Ballian)

The term *choros* is used in the sources to describe the circular space below the dome and by extension the circular lighting devices of Byzantine churches which hang from the cornice of the dome (Bouras 1982A, pp. 480–1). The suspension chains are made from metal straps, linked together by discs, and terminate in a cruciform arrangement of four discs, to which are attached the twelve horizontal openwork strips. They are decorated with strikingly stylised fabulous beasts with their front leg raised: two sphinxes, face to face, flank a double-headed eagle and a quadruped, of which the head and part of the body are visible. Attached to the upper part of the strips are four or six pricket candle-holders, placed symmetrically on either side of a foliate cross. From the lower part hang successively an openwork chain, a cross whose horizontal arms terminate in small hands holding candlesticks and the polycandela. The various sections are held together by single or double dragon-headed hooks.

The stylised zoomorphic patterns recall those of a polycandelon in the Metsovo Museum, Greece, and a censer in the British Museum, London, both of which display affiliations with the animals of thirteenth-century Islamic art (Metsovo 2000, pp. 90–3, no. 153; London 1994, p. 201, no. 217; Ballian 2004, p. 124). Further examples of *choroi*, intact or fragmentary, can be found in churches in Serbia; dated examples are no earlier than the second half of the fourteenth century (Todorović 1978, pp. 28–36). The Dečani *choros* (largely restored in 1397), which is still in its original location, has horizontal openwork strips with stylised fabulous beasts wedged with foliate ornament, as found in later, Ottoman-ornamented examples on Mount Athos (Subotić 1998, pp. 79, 238, pls 79, 101; Thessaloniki 1997C, pp. 372–3, no. 9.67 [A. Ballian]). The summary detail and rough workmanship of the Munich *choros* shows it to be a standardised product, unlike those in the Serbian churches, at least two of which, the Dečani and Markov, were commissioned by royal patronage.

ANNA BALLIAN

171

Copper-alloy polycandelon

Eastern Mediterranean, *c.* 550–650
Copper-alloy, length of suspension unit 87 cm; diameter of disk 28 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PR. 1994.0610.11
PROVENANCE: probably Syria; from the Marcopoli Collection
SELECTED REFERENCE: London 1994, no. 116 (C. Entwistle)

This copper-alloy polycandelon is in the form of a pierced disk with a central openwork cross surrounded by nine circular perforations which would have held glass lamps. Three chains attach the disk to a smaller openwork one with trefoil finials and a central cruciform monogram (resolving as ΑΝΑCTACIOY or ΙΟΥCTINIANOY; Anastasios or Ioustinianos). A further suspension unit in the form of a chain of twisted S-shaped links which terminates in a hook is attached to the upper part of the central disk.

Polycandela were multiple holders for glass oil-lamps. Most surviving examples are made of copper-alloy, but, as the *Liber Pontificalis* mentions, precious metals such as gold and silver were also employed in their manufacture: silver examples are known from the seventh-century treasures of Lampsacus and Sion, respectively in the British Museum, London, and the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Dalton 1901, no. 393; Boyd 1992, pp. 24–7, pls S25.1–S35.1).

Polycandela embraced designs ranging from the architectural to the geometric and generally held between three and nine lamps, although larger specimens are known. This example could have been employed either as a single unit or alternatively suspended from a multiple hanger such as the one in the Archäologische Staatssammlung in Munich, from which over 25 polycandela were hung (cat.170). Multiple lamp-holders are attested in both secular and religious contexts. Arculf, a bishop of Gaul on a visit to Jerusalem in 670, described the lamps in the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives as follows: 'to the customary light of the eight lamps on the night of the feast of the Lord's Ascension it is usual to add innumerable other lamps; and under the terrible and wondrous gleaming of these, pouring out copiously through the glass shutters of the windows, all Mount Olives seems not alone to be illuminated, but even to be on fire' (Meehan 1983, p. 69).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

172

Church bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432
Cast bronze, height 72 cm, diameter 55 cm

Pec Patriarchate
PROVENANCE: Collection of the Pec Patriarchate. Gift of feudal lord Nikola Rodop during the reign of despot Stefan Lazarevic and despot Djurdje Brankovic
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radojkovic 1936, no. 27; Paris 1983, no. 82

This is a tall narrow bell with a broad mouth. On top there is a cast shaft with six strong, fluted links of square cross-section for fixing the bell onto a special wooden beam. The bell would have been hung with strong hemp ropes from a beam to support its substantial weight.

Stylised rope ornament encircles the bell in four rows. The upper part is decorated with an icon of St Nicholas within a simple, double and stylised frame. The saint blesses with his right hand, holding the Gospel-book in his left hand. The robe is schematically drawn with folded omophorion with two relief crosses over his chest; under the sakkos a double *epitrachelion* can be seen.

There are three inscriptions in Old Slavonic: *First row, from the top:* + ХВАЛИТЕ ІЕГО В К МВАЛ. ДОБРОГЛАСНИХ. / ХВАЛИТЕ ІЕГО В К МВАЛ ВСАКА ЩАН ІА (Psalm CL, 5)
Second row: + В САКО ДНХАНІЕ ДА ХВАЛИТ ГА (Psalm CL, 6)
СНІЕ ЗВОНО СТАГО НІКОЛ НЖЕ ВО сГоАНІА / В ЛЕТО ЦМ. МЦА АВГУСТА В
Third row: МНОГО ГР ІNІ РОДОП

Church bells were not used in Early Byzantium. Instead, the summons to church was signalled by a wooden gong, the *semantron*, and this is still used in many Orthodox monasteries today. After iconoclasm and in response to Western craftsmanship and practice, bells were imported and used in Byzantium. Bell towers became a part of church architecture, and in due course the ringing of bells marked not only the starting times of the services and solemn moments in the liturgy, but also served to warn of danger or to signal good news. Each church had at least one bell, while cathedral churches and monasteries had whole sets of bells (up to twelve) that were sounded in a specific manner. After 1453 the Turks banned the use of bells and in Serbia very few have survived; many were melted down for use as guns. This bell most probably remained because it was removed from the belfry before the seventeenth century and apparently buried for safe keeping. It belongs now to the treasury of the Pec Patriarchate.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIĆ

173

Rodop's bell

Serbia, 2 August 1432
Cast bronze, 58 × 43 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2177
PROVENANCE: The Holy Virgin Hvosnatska (?), Kosovo and Metohija
SELECTED REFERENCES: Popović 1926–27; Radojković 1977a, p. 87; Jovanović 1991; Blagojević 1997; New York 2004, no. 75, p. 141 (N. Cerović)

This bell, elongated in shape, has a rectangular section depicting the Virgin Orans in low relief. It is decorated with bands with the donor's inscription: (+prhstaa vladqce bce primi i maloe sje prinowenje mnogogrewnago raba svojego rodp vy lhto Ocm mscaa avgusta v dny mnago grhwnyj rdop) (Holy Lady, Mother of God, accept this small offering from your sinful servant Rodop). In the year 6940, 2nd day of the month of August. The bell has a soprano ring.

The inscription states the name of the donor, the nobleman Rodop and the date of casting: 2 August 1432. Historical sources tell us that Rodop freed the despot Djuradj Branković (1427–56) from the prison at Constantinople, where he had been held captive after the Battle of Ankyra (Blagojević 1997, p. 194). Rodop also donated a bell to the Church of St Nicholas, Drenica.

The bell's decoration and inscription reveal the careful work that went into making the piece. The bell for the Church of St Nikola in Drenica is made in the same way, including the representation of St Nicholas. It is probable that Rodop ordered the representations of the patrons to whom he used to pray, such as St Nicholas (see cat. 172). The impression that both this bell and the one from Drenica were produced in the same workshop and by the same master is based on their shape, the representations, the inscription and the support. We have no precise information on the workshop, but it is known that bell-making workshops existed on the Adriatic coast, and that travelling master-smelters were active in Kosovo and Metohija.

NATAŠA CEROVIĆ

174

Copper alloy plaque with the Hodegetria and saints

Byzantium, tenth or eleventh century
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 10.8 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London. PAE 1981, 1-3.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Brussels 1982, no. Br 24 (D. Buckton); London 1994, no. 159 (C. Entwistle)

The Mother of God stands holding the Christ Child between the Archangel Michael to her right and St Theodore to her left on this cast copper-alloy plaque. Michael and the Mother of God are named in abbreviated inscriptions on either side of their haloes; St Theodore's name is written out in full. They are surrounded by a raised border with a sinuous leaf-scroll decoration. The Virgin is shown as the Hodegetria, pointing to her son as the route to salvation. In return, Christ raises his right hand in a gesture of blessing, and holds a scroll in his left. The archangel and saint to either side both face forwards, representatives of the heavenly court that accompanies the holy couple. This is emphasised by their dress. Both wear court robes, notably the chlamys, a cloak clasped over the right shoulder. On Michael's robe is a decorated rectangle, the *tablion*, a further attribute of senior courtly rank. St Theodore's court dress can be contrasted with his appearance in many other images from this period, in which he is often shown in military dress to reflect his role as a warrior saint (see, for example, cat. 179). This image reflects a different facet of his cult, promoting his aristocratic associations, his close relationship to God and his martyrdom, denoted by the martyr's cross he holds in his right hand. The style of the figures is closest to that on Byzantine ivories of the tenth to eleventh centuries. A small object such as this must have been for personal use. It has no holes or other means of attaching it to something larger, so it may well have been designed as a focus for prayers or to be donated as an ex-voto offering.

ANTONY EASTMOND

175

Homilies on the Virgin Mary by James Kokkinobaphos, folio 3*v*

Constantinople, first half of the twelfth century
Manuscript on parchment, 23 × 16.5 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Gr 1208
PROVENANCE: acquired in Istanbul between 1686 and 1688; Bibliothèque royale, Paris, 1688
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bordier 1883, pp. 147–72; Omont 1927; Weitzmann 1947; pp. 148, 188, 191; Grabar 1953, pp. 180–3; Paris 1958, no. 36; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1964–65, pp. 42–3, 196–201; Dufrenne 1981, pp. 448–50; Anderson 1982; Hutter and Canart 1991; Paris 1992, no. 272, pp. 361–2

The six homilies on the Virgin Mary contained in this manuscript were composed in the first half of the twelfth century and were based on the apocryphal Gospel of James and his Byzantine commentators. The author of the homilies, James, a monk of the monastery of Kokkinobaphos and a kinsman of the imperial family, was also responsible for designing the cycle of illustrations; these bear important witness to the religious art of the Komnenoi. The first image in the manuscript (folio 1*r*) depicts the author first standing at the feet of St John Chrysostom and then kneeling before St Gregory of Nyssa. Another example of the same text illustrated by a cycle of miniature paintings which is almost identical, apart from being far superior in technique and presented in a format that is nearly twice the size of this one, can be found in a manuscript now in the Vatican (Vaticanus graecus 1162), which may have been copied by the same scribe.

On the page opposite the beginning of the first homily, in both the Paris and the Vatican manuscripts, a full-page miniature painting depicts a sumptuously decorated Byzantine church, inside which the scene of the Ascension is portrayed: below Christ enthroned in his mandorla carried by four angels stand the Virgin Mary and the Apostles. In the lower edge, separated from the central group by twin columns, stand Isaiah (on the left) and David (on the right) unfurling before them a scroll bearing a verse from the Old Testament. To the question posed in the Book of Isaiah, 'Who is this coming from Edom?' (Isaiah LXIII, 1), the psalter replies: 'God rises to the roaring of nations' (Psalm XLVI, 6). In the upper part of the church, below the central cupola, the Apostles are shown in a semicircle around Peter and Paul on the day of Pentecost. The main subject of this collection of homilies is emphasised by the initial marking the beginning of the text on the opposite page: in the letter *omicron* of the word *ouranon* can be seen a portrait of the Virgin and Child surmounted by the inscription 'The Mother of God'.

CHRISTIAN FÖRSTEL

176

Perfume brazier in the form of a domed building

Constantinople or Italy, end of the twelfth century
Silver, partially gilded, embossed and perforated, 36 × 30 cm

Basilica di San Marco, Venice, Tesoro, inv. no. 109
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pasini 1886, no. 1, pp. 25–26; Molinier 1888, no. 17, pp. 84–85; Gallo 1967, passim; Hahnloser 1971, no. 109, pp. 86–8 (A. Grabar); Paris 1984, no. 32, pp. 237–43 (D. Gaborit-Chopin); Niero 1993; Polacco 1999; Venice 2000, p. 151 (A. Augusti)

This singular object in silver-gilt is regarded as one of the most exquisite objects in the Treasury of St Mark's; it shows both Byzantine and Western artistic influences. Scholars have advanced a number of different hypotheses about its place of origin: Venice, South Italy and Constantinople.

The model church is built on a square plan and has, around a central cupola, four domed apses, and four towers surmounted by a quadrangular cusp. It recalls the representation of the church in the Homilies of the monk James Kokkinobaphos (cat. 152), which is sometimes identified as the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

The domes, the roofs of the quadrangular towers and the upper walls are all decorated with perforated plant patterns. The embossed decoration can be seen on the lower wall, where, beside the two small doorways containing the haloed figures of an armed man (Andreia, strength) and a woman pointing her right hand at her forehead (Phronesis, prudence), the following symbols are arranged (in anticlockwise order): a griffin, a lion, a cherub with his head in an upturned basket, a man and a woman, a centaur, a lion rampant, two griffins facing one another, another two lions, two sirens, a griffin and a lion. In medieval symbolism these images represent the vices that the two moral virtues, depicted on the doors, must vanquish in order that the 'little church', which represents heavenly Jerusalem, may be entered. There can be no doubt, therefore, about the devotional purpose of the object even before it became a reliquary; a slight alteration, possibly carried out later in Venice, allows the removal of the central cupola so that a small rock-crystal bottle may be inserted; the bottle contains the blood that flowed from a crucifix shattered by a pagan in Beirut in 320.

MARIA DA VILLA URBANI

177

Psalter with the veneration of an icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria

Constantinople and Cyprus, around 1300
Tempera and gold on parchment, Latin and Greek bilingual Psalter and other texts of various dates, 29 × 24 cm

Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 A 9 (Hamilton 119)
PROVENANCE: according to folio 1*v*, the book belonged to Carlotta, the last Lusignan queen of Jerusalem, Cyprus and Armenia (1458–73) and a member of the Palaiologan family
SELECTED REFERENCES: Buchtal 1983, pp. 157–70, especially p. 159 (article first published in 1975); Athens 2000, no. 54, pp. 388–9 (N. P. Ševčenko); New York 2004, no. 77, p. 153 (A. Weyl Carr); Pentcheva 2006, pp. 109–43, 160

This miniature is the most informative representation showing the Byzantine cult of the Virgin Hodegetria in action. It realistically records how an icon believed to have been painted by the Evangelist St Luke and blessed by Mary was displayed for veneration, with its red veil (*peplos*) rolled up and tied back to reveal the holy image. The large icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria pointing to the Child between the busts of two angels is fixed with diagonal struts to a heavy stand on a stone floor. Below the icon is a smaller copy of the image, which was detachable for kissing. The icon is protected by a canopy (ciborium) on columns, and has a figure of Christ at the apex, perhaps a symbolic reference to his acceptance of prayers. A lamp hangs on each side of the icon, and it is protected by a metal grille. Outside the grille in the foreground in front of it are two praying figures, a bearded man on the left in a red tunic with a distinctive sash at his waist (meaning uncertain), and a veiled woman on the right. Behind them and the grille are two youths and a child on the left, and three on the right, probably women: all are dressed in red. It is not clear whether this is just one family, or a husband and wife in front of a choir or group of guardians of the miraculous icon. The confraternity which guarded the icon of the Hodegon monastery at Constantinople dressed in red.

The most likely conclusion is that this is a visualisation of the Constantinopolitan setting of the cult inside the Hodegon monastery (but not the Tuesday procession outside). Buchthal, who studied the manuscript carefully at first hand (1983), had no doubt that the six full-page miniatures in a separate quire at the beginning were not part of the original manuscript but were made in Constantinople, quite probably at the Hodegon monastery, and later inserted into the book. His argument is persuasive, but has been challenged (Athens 2000; New York 2004), although without new codicological evidence. They argue that the Psalter text of the rest of the book was made for use at Famagusta, and conclude that the miniature represents a Hodegetria cult in that city.

ROBIN CORMACK

178

Tray with representation of the Apostles Peter and Paul flanking a cross

Carthage, around 400
Clay, 37.9 × 30.8 cm; width of frame 4.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 12405 a+β, 12406a, 12409, 12431 (mended from five sherds and restored)
SELECTED REFERENCES: Salomonson 1969, pp. 57–8, fig. 77; Hayes 1972, p. 87; Garbsch and Overbeck 1983, p. 141, no. 92; Poulou-Papadimitriou 1994, pp. 354–60, figs 1–6; Guery and Slim 1998, pp. 199–212, fig. 9

This rectangular tray belongs to the category of Late Roman *terra sigillata* (*sigillée claire C, ARSW, Form Hayes 56*) and was made using a pair of moulds. The horizontal frame has an edge of semicircular cross-section and the base, of almost triangular cross-section, is 1 cm high. The tan clay is fine-grained with very few inclusions and the slip is of the same colour. The tray bears traces of lead nails and a hole from an ancient repair. In the course of mending this object, it was noted that some sherds in the collection belong to the tray, while other fragments that had been added as belonging to it come from a different tray.

The main representation, executed in low relief, is framed by a double incised line. Incised at the centre is a Latin cross with the letter 'Rho' on the arm. Left of the cross is an enthroned male figure in the type of the seated philosopher, with the right hand raised in a gesture of blessing, while the left one, covered by the himation, holds a closed scroll. The large, lively eyes, the thick beard and the bald forehead permit identification of the figure as the Apostle Paul. Right of the cross is another seated male figure, clearly the Apostle Peter (Benaki Museum fragment, inv. nos 12425, 12430).

The frame is decorated by scenes in smaller scale, from the story of Jonah, while on the two vertical sides of the tray is a fish motif in larger scale and more realistically rendered.

Represented on this tray are important Christian scenes. The two leading Apostles on either side of the Cross expresses the union of the heavenly and the earthly Church, while the allegorical story of Jonah symbolises the Fall of Man and Salvation. Christ is symbolised by the fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ, fish, being an acrostic for 'Jesus Christ Son of God the Saviour').

Trays of this type were made in the area of Carthage from 360 to 440, but few survive and so perhaps they were rare. Their shape, which copies that of silver trays, their relief decoration and its symbolic character suggest that these were not simply utilitarian objects but used in church worship.

NATALIA POULOU-PAPADIMITRIOU

179

Gilt-copper plaque with St Theodore

Byzantium (Constantinople?), mid-eleventh century
Gilt copper, 12.5 × 6.7 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 90, 7-1, 3
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.554; London 1994, no.160 (C. Entwistle)

St Theodore was one of the most popular warrior saints in Byzantium. On this cast copper plaque he appears in military dress, holding a spear and shield, his sword hanging from a strap across his back. The armour of his cuirass has been carefully carved, and he wears a sash around his chest and a cloak to denote his officer status. His sainthood is indicated both by his halo and by the small dais on which he stands. The small scale of this plaque suggests that it was a personal object. Although relatively few such objects are known, it is likely that they were made in large numbers. Other comparable examples are known with images of other saints, such as a plaque showing St George in the Kanellopoulos Museum, Athens (Brussels 1982, no.Br.28).

The broken projection at the base of the plaque may have allowed it to be set up on a stand or carried in procession. It was probably either offered to a church as an ex-voto on behalf of its owner, who was presumably particularly devoted to this saint, or carried around to invoke the saint's protection for the wearer at all times. Comparisons with other small-scale carvings suggest that this example was probably made in the eleventh century.

ANTONY EASTMOND

180

Textile hanging with St Makarios and woman in prayer

Egypt, fourth or fifth century
Linen and wool, 105 × 86 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no.7145
PROVENANCE: purchased from Naham (Cairo), 1919
SELECTED REFERENCES: Apostolaki 1953; De Francovich 1963, p.156, fig.96; Marangou 1971, p.13; Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, no.331, pp.196, 197; Thessaloniki 2002, no.291, pp.278, 279

The two selvedges and the warp fringe on the bottom side are preserved, indicating that the present dimensions are original. This piece belongs to a group of looped hangings but it is the only piece preserved in its original dimensions and is much smaller than the other known pieces which generally have three or four registers. The looped decoration almost completely fills the weaving: beneath an aedicule are two figures, an inscription and plant motifs.

The two standing figures are viewed front on but with feet seen from the side. The figure on the right, a woman, appears slightly (deceptively) shorter. Their hands are raised in prayer (as orants). The facial details of the man are graphically depicted. His head sits on a thick neck which is the width of his shoulders. The figure wears a red *tunica* with long sleeves and long green *clavi*. A blue mantle with H-shaped decorations covers his left shoulder and falls on the front and back of the man's body. The weaver probably intended the mantle to follow the Classical Roman manner. The woman's facial details are similar to those of the man. She too wears a *tunica* but slightly longer, with richer *clavi* in a green and yellow chequered pattern. A (faded) purple veil covers her head, loops over her chest, and falls behind her to her feet. The bottom of the purple mantle has two rosettes. The red zigzag lines next to the head and feet represent the fringes of the veil.

According to Anna Apostolaki (1953), the Coptic inscription can be read as an invocation to SS. Kyriakos and Makarios. However, the reading of Maximilien Durant seems preferable, as the figures are a man and a woman and not two men: 'Hethyme (the daughter of) Kyriakos (and) Apa Makare'.

This hanging follows a long Egyptian tradition: the funerary stelae from Kom Abou Billou dating from the Roman period contain exactly the same depiction of a deceased person in a praying position under an *aedicula* (Hooper 1961). Here the pagan symbols of those stelae have been replaced by a Christian invocation. This arrangement is also common on Christian funerary stelae (Paris 2000A, nos 101, 102, 104, 105).

ROBERTA CORTOPASSI

181

Reliquary sarcophagus

Byzantium, fifth–seventh century
Marble agglomerate, 27 × 51 × 25.5 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv no.AD 7964
SELECTED REFERENCE: Martiniani-Reber 2000

This reliquary sarcophagus consists of a trough in light marble, lightly veined in red, with a sliding lid. It was designed to contain a silver reliquary box of welded sheet silver (inv. no. AD 7965), also with a flat lid, which is too fragile to be exhibited.

The sarcophagus differs from the usual pattern only in its much smaller size; its function was to hold not a body, but a relic. In order that the silver reliquary could be placed inside it, it has a sliding lid – an unusual feature – instead of the more normal pitched lid with acroteria on top or a flat lid that can be fitted on top.

The sarcophagus can be connected with four other examples: one in the National Museum, Varna (inv.III, 522; Buschhausen 1971, pp.291–2, no.C 26); one that was discovered beneath the altar in the small church dedicated to SS. Nazarius and Celsus in Garbagnate (Buschhausen 1971, p.285, no.C 15); one from Aïn-Berich in Algeria (Buschhausen 1971, pp.318–19, no.C 72); and one from the sanctuary in the basilica in Odos Tritis Septembriou, Thessaloniki (Makropoulou 1983, pp.25–46, pls 6 and 7). Thus, although they are unusual, sarcophagi with sliding lids have been found over a wide geographical area.

The sarcophagus and reliquary are decorated with great restraint: large crosses are somewhat clumsily carved on the trough and lid of the sarcophagus. Another cross is embossed on the lid of the reliquary, which also bears an engraved inscription in irregular Greek capital letters, 'ΛΙΨΑΝΑ [for ΛΕΙΨΑΝΑ] ΑΓΙΩΝ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΩΝ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΡΤΥΡΩΝ', (the remains of the holy apostles and martyrs).

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

182

Reliquary crucifix

Constantinople, first half of the tenth century,
Monastery of St Michael, Damokraneia (now Güzelce)
Partially gilded silver crucifix holder,
36.4 × 23.7 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv.no.AD 3062
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bank 1980; Bouras 1980; Bouvier 1980; Cheynet 1981; Djurić 1980A; Djurić 1980B

This reliquary crucifix used to contain a bronze crucifix whose arms terminated in two small silver balls. The bronze cross may be older; it fits into the reliquary crucifix with some difficulty. Although the reliquary crucifix is beautifully executed in its own right, its primary interest lies in the inscription on both the back and the front, which has been the subject of numerous studies.

The text has been transcribed in two ways.

The first, by Bouras, reads: 'This priceless labour, the fruit of great devotion, was created by Leo, commander in chief of the Macedonians, patrician and *domestikos* of the Western Empire, who aspires after St Michael, patron of the armies, the army of Chonae, which has already reappeared, so that he may hereafter be given the new name of Damocranite.' The alternative reading is by Bouvier: 'Out of devotion to the divine Michael, chief of the celestial armies, who appeared at Chonae wearing the features of a young man, this excellent piece born of holy ardour, Leon had it made, first magistrate of the Macedonians, patrician and *domestikos* of the Western Empire, also known as the Damocranite.'

The question of Leo's identity and the exact period at which he lived is therefore still open to question despite the studies made of the crucifix. The donor mentioned at the beginning of the inscription is difficult to identify. His first name, Leo, is known, as is his military position as commander, *domestikos ton scholon*, of the Western Empire, which undoubtedly explains his devotion to the Archangel Michael.

According to Bouras, Leo might be Leo Phokas, who was appointed Domestikos of the Occident after 959, and remained in post until 963, the date at which he became a *kouropalates*. Cheynet also suggests convincingly that he could be Leo Tornikios, who rose up against the Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55). This Leo may have commissioned the crucifix before 1046, the year in which he was posted to the Iberian peninsula.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

183

Epistyle from the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou

Made on site, at Skripou, 873/74
Marble, 18.5 × 333 × 33.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.46
PROVENANCE: Monastery of Skripou, Orchomenos, Boeotia
SELECTED REFERENCES: Strzygowski 1894, pp.1–16; Sotiriou 1931, pp.147–8, pls XLI, 1 and 3; Grabar 1963, pp.90–5, pls XLI, 2 (below) and 4–6; Megaw 1966, pl.1:a, c, h, pl.2:a–c; Papalexandrou 1998

This sculpture is one of the first sanctuary screens (templon) made after the end of iconoclasm in 843, and it belongs to the surviving large church at Skripou founded by an imperial official, the protospatharios Leo in 873/74. The exterior and interior of the church are profusely decorated with ornamental string-courses, cornices and other features, and with inscriptions recording the foundation and the dedication to the Virgin, St Peter and St Paul. From the sixth century onwards Byzantine churches were equipped with a higher sanctuary barrier than before, known as a templon. Skripou has a central templon in front of the sanctuary and additional ones for each of the two side chapels. All three had collapsed by the late nineteenth century, but most of the broken pieces have been found and stored today.

This epistyle (now broken into two) was originally fixed at the opening to the north chapel, dedicated to the Apostle Paul (Megaw 1966). It was secured at each end in the walls and supported by two colonnettes on each side of the central opening into the chapel. At the centre of the front face are three decorated crosses, between a sequence of lyre-shaped acanthus with small crosses. The decoration is identical to that on the cornices of the church, indicating clearly that the templon was an organic part of the monument. The back of the epistyle facing the altar has a simple spiralling stem. The underside is decorated at the centre by a cross, surrounded by vine stems and two peacocks. Two plain surfaces indicate the position of the colonnettes. The rest of the beam has interlinked roundels enclosing animals with anthropomorphic heads, alternating with ibexes. This decoration is designed to be seen the correct way up by the priest inside the sanctuary.

The relief style of the sculpture matches an epistyle found in the Church of St Gregory in Thebes, no doubt by the same workshop, probably based at Thebes. The relief sculpture has much in common with the slightly later Church of Constantine Lips at Constantinople, indicating the wide dissemination of such carving around the empire.

EVANGELIA DAFI

184

Closure panel with two peacocks

Thebes, twelfth century
Marble, 57 × 60 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.X314
PROVENANCE: Thebes
SELECTED REFERENCES: Orlandos 1939–40, pp.138–9; Hieronymos 2005, p.72, fig.56

This almost intact panel of white marble has suffered some minor losses in the lower part. Represented in profile are a symmetrical pair of preening peacocks with fanned tails, on either side of a plant sprouting from a tubular vessel decorated with astragal (bead-and-reel) pattern. Dominating the centre is a flower, in which nestles a bird – possibly a partridge – turning its head to the left. Two symmetrically developed and opposed rinceaux terminating in half-leaves, a common motif in Middle Byzantine sculpture (Sklavou-Mavroeidi 1999, nos 239, 244, 245), sprout from the central stem and fill the background. In contrast to the schematic rendering of the plant, the peacocks are portrayed with a certain realism. The upper parts of their bodies are executed with circles with a central hole, the lower parts with parallel or vertical, deep incisions, and the tails with a combination of circles and incisions.

The theme of animals – real or imaginary – or birds flanking a plant that symbolises the Tree of Life is encountered frequently in Byzantine sculpture (Sklavou-Mavroeidi 1999, nos 151, 156, 157). However, the rare detail of the little bird in the foliage endows this particular composition with a lively originality.

The distinctive carving technique is characteristic of works of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Sklavou-Mavroeidi 1999, nos 250, 251, 252, 254, 255, 256, 257), and the decorative subject of spiralling stems are elements that support a twelfth-century date.

This panel was found near the modern Church of St John Kaloktenes (*c.*1900) (Orlandos 1939–40, p.138): he was bishop of Thebes in the late twelfth century (Delvenakiotou 1970; Savvidis 2000, p.581). The size of the panel indicates that it was part of a little templon screen in a small Byzantine church, whose identity eludes us.

ANDROMACHE KATSELAKI

185

Double-sided closure panel

Thebes, ninth century
Marble, 88.3 × 105.8 × 10.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv.no.A249
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou 1924, pp.23–5, fig.44; Sotiriou 1931, pp.150–1, n. 1; Grabar 1963, pp.95–6, pl.XLIII, 3; Megaw 1966, p.18, n. 44; Papalexandrou 1998, pp.221, 230, fig.92; Hieronymos 2005, figs 54, 60; Koilakou 2008

This closure panel reuses an ancient plaque, on the upper surface of which can be seen the beginning of an ancient inscription, possibly of an honorific decree: ΑΡΕΤΗϹ ΕΝΕΚΕΝ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΛΟΚΑΓΑΘΙΑϹ ΘΕ[ΟΙϹ]... On both faces the subject is developed within a rectangular frame of rinceaux with ivy leaves. Represented on one face are three trees: the central tree, with foliage of ivy leaves and trefoils, grows from a conical base where two birds sip water. The space between the birds and the tree is filled with two rosettes. The smaller trees have leaves and fruit; in each of the two lower corners is a bird. At the centre of the second face are two peacocks facing each other, flanking a lyre-shaped tree. In the field is a rinceau terminating in trefoils and bunches of grapes, while below the peacocks are two small trees with ivy leaves.

The closure slab is the product of a local marble-carving workshop that flourished in the second half of the ninth century in Thebes, at the time the administrative centre of the whole region. This workshop is documented by the architectural sculptures of two important ecclesiastical monuments in Boeotia: the ruined Church of St Gregory at Thebes (872–73) and the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou (873–74; cat.183); sculptures found elsewhere, such as Euboea, Athens, Corinth and Volos, are also attributed to it (Grabar 1963, pp.95–9; Papalexandrou 1998, pp.220–33). Similarities in technique, subjects and

style leave no doubt that this panel should be ascribed to this workshop, even though there is no indication of its provenance.

The scenes in low relief are distinguished by symmetry, schematisation and a two-dimensional concept of composition. There is an obvious attempt to fill the entire surface with motifs. Characteristic of the decorative subjects (Tree of Life, peacocks) is their eschatological symbolism, as they are linked with eternal life and paradise (Underwood 1950, pp.88, 99–101; Bouras 1982B; Maguire 1987, p.39).

NIKOS D. KONTOGIANNIS AND AIKATERINA TSAKA

186

Double-sided closure panel

Thebes (?), 872/73
Marble, 97.5 × 73.8 × 9.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. 8246
PROVENANCE: Church of St Gregory the Theologian, Thebes
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou 1924; Grabar 1963, pp.95–99, pl.XLIII.1–4; Koilakou 1998, pp.98–101, drawings 2–3, pl.36.α, β, with earlier bibliography; Papalexandrou 1998, pp.220–33; Hieronymos 2005, p.67, figs 47, 48; Koilakou 2008

This closure panel from a templon screen is decorated on both faces. On one face, within a rectangular frame, are two peacocks facing each other pecking the branch of a tree standing between them. In the lower part is a third peacock, biting a snake. A smaller bird fills the space between them. The panel is surrounded by a double frame of degenerated astragal pattern with lozenges and a spiralling stem that forms circles in which are inscribed rosettes. The central subject on the other face is a Greek cross with flaring ends to the arms. From each arm sprout stems that join together and split into smaller ones, terminating in trefoils or ivy-leaf-shaped buds, forming a mesh around the cross. The composition is framed by a zone of linked palm-tree motifs.

The thematic repertoire is inspired primarily by Early Byzantine models, such as the two confronted peacocks flanking a tree and the cross. Here the compositions are enriched by a multitude of details, in an endeavour to cover every part of the available space. The birds and plants in low relief are transformed into flat and conventional decorative motifs. A disposition for the ornamental is apparent in the treatment of the peacocks' plumage, which is indicated by incised lines and circles, as well as in the diverse rosettes.

According to the donor inscription, the Church of St Gregory was founded by the imperial *kandidatos Basileios* in 872 (Sotiriou 1924; Koilakou 1998; Koilakou 2008). The sculpted decoration of this church, like that of Skripou, was probably the work of a workshop based at Thebes (Grabar 1963, pp.95–9, pl.XLIII.1–4; Papalexandrou 1998, pp.220–33). The craftsmanship and the shape of the peacocks' bodies on this panel are similar to ninth-century sculptures from Constantinople, while the composition, with a central panel enclosing several birds and surrounded by a double frame, recalls Byzantine ivory caskets (Grabar 1963, pp.95–7, pl.XLIV.1).

MARIA SKORDARA

187

Silver chalice

Syria, Early Byzantine, sixth century
Silver with niello and gilding, 18 × 26.6 × 16 cm

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Edward J. and Mary S. Holmes Fund, 1971.633
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dodd 1973, pp.15, 25, fig.7, no.9, note 32; Boston 1972, p.64, no.47; Boston 1977, pp.193–4, no.225; New York 1979, p.608, no.543; Baltimore 1986, pp.246–7, no.73; Grossmann, Ledig and Kondoleon 2008, p.51

This elegant silver chalice, used to hold the wine of the Eucharist, served as part of a liturgical set for an Early Byzantine church. The technique and form – partially gilded silver hammered into a broad cup attached with a knob to a flared foot – is very close to sixth-century chalices found in Syria. Indeed, the chalice is said to have been found in Syria (it passed through collections in Lebanon and Switzerland); Fuad Alouf Bey, the Lebanese collector who once owned it, indicated (Dodd 1973, p.25) that the Boston chalice was found with a silver paten with stamps from the reign of Anastasios (AD 498–518), but this information has never been confirmed (Baltimore 1986, p.246).

Each side of this cup is decorated with a large engraved and gilded Christogram (a combination of chi and rho, the first two letters of the name of Christ in Greek); the letters alpha and omega (the first and last in the Greek alphabet) that hang from the chi refer to Christ as the beginning and the end of all things (Book of Revelation I, 8). Around the rim of the cup is a Greek inscription inlaid with niello (a dark metallic substance): 'Having vowed, Sara offered [this cup] to the First Martyr [Stephen].'

The Boston chalice, together with many similarly styled Early Byzantine liturgical objects found in north-western Syria, attest to the considerable prosperity of the so-called 'dead cities', an area characterised by fertile plains, agricultural bounty and at least 700 documented settlements to date. The stability of Byzantine rule from the fourth to the seventh centuries in this region allowed the pious and prosperous to finance the construction of many churches, monasteries and to donate expensive liturgical objects. The dedication on the Boston chalice, in fact, follows the form of inscriptions found on stone door lintels with the names of donors and Christograms in the 'dead cities'. In this case, a woman named Sara undoubtedly gave the valuable chalice to her local church in thanks for her answered prayers.

CHRISTINE KONDOLEON

188

Reliquary of the True Cross

Southern Italy (?), late twelfth century or *c.*1200
Silver gilt, cloisonné opaque enamels on a silver gilt support, wood, glass paste, 24 × 11.7 × 1.5 cm

Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, inv. no.CA 1534
PROVENANCE: acquired by F. Baudot de Beaune (from Charvet, Paris); Baudot sale, 19 April 1883
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gleize 1883, no.1534, pp.440–1; Paris 1900, no.1585, p.287; Paris 1992, no.253, pp.340–1; Palermo 1995, no.18, pp.115–16

This large reliquary cross has two horizontal arms supplemented by a third, shorter and oblique one, evoking the *suppedaneum* (foot support of Christ on the Cross), at the bottom. The cross may have been originally encased within a precious jewelled box. The wooden core is sheathed with a silver-gilt sheet embellished with enamel plaques at the intersection of the upper arms. The naked figure of Christ on the Cross in a loincloth is on one side, topped by an ornamental quatrefoil, while the empty cruciform cavity for relics, on the other side, is crowned by a medallion with a bust-length figure of Christ making the gesture of blessing. The arms have five rectangular tips, only three of which are original and bear an enamelled pattern of stepped crosses. The field is further enriched with oval and rectangular cabochons of glass paste bordered with twisted wire and a series of small loops that may have supported a string of pearls.
The enamelled Crucifixion reproduces tenth- or eleventh-century models, such as the one found on the reliquary box from the Cathedral of Monopoli, which also has a border of stepped crosses in enamel (New York 1997, no.110, pp.162–3). However, the elongated proportions of the body of Christ, the exclusive use of opaque enamels and the gold scroll embedded in the enamelled background all point to a later date in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. The cellwork and figure drawing of the enamels and the physical appearance of the gilded surface, in their turn, bear similarities with South Italian works of this period, such as the Gospel-book cover of the Archbishop Alfano in Capua (Ravenna 1990, no.77, pp.194–5). The recurrence of the third short arm on a reliquary cross from Alba Fucenze in the Abruzzo region, now in the Palazzo Venezia, Rome (Frolow 1965, fig.51, p.150), favours an attribution to a South Italian workshop (Paris 1992, no.255, pp.340–1).

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

189

Processional cross

Constantinople, first half of eleventh century
Cast copper alloy, hammered, engraved and punched, 36 × 30.1 × 0.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.11442
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no.559; Sandin 1989, pp.36–7; Sandin 1991, pp.297–307, no.42; Athens 1994, p.263, no.86 (A.Drandaki); Deliyannis and Fotopoulos 1997, p.226, fig.464; Athens 2000, pp.360–1, no.41 (A.Drandaki); Lisbon 2007, pp.180–1, no.93 (A.Drandaki)

The flared arms of this processional cross end in roundels flanked by undecorated circular serifs at the corners. The six holes on the underside of the horizontal arms were for pendants (*pentelia*). On the front is the crucified Christ, wearing a loincloth. Inscribed within circles on the horizontal arms are the Virgin and St John the Theologian, both turned towards Christ. The Crucifixion scene is completed by the biblical texts: IΔOY O Y(I)O(C) COY (Behold your Son) and IΔOY H MH(TH)P COY (Behold your Mother) (John XIX, 26–7). On the upper roundel is St George.

On the back is the standing figure of the Virgin Mary Orans, H BΛAXEPNHTHCAN (The Blachernitissa). She is framed on the roundels, by four healing saints: Kosmas to the left, Damianos to the right, Hermolaos above and Panteleimon below (now lost but identified by the surviving inscription).

The cross has three dedications: beneath Golgotha: K(YPI)E BOHΘH TΩ CO ΔOY[Λ]O IΩ(ANNH) (Lord, help your servant John). It is punched and the script is similar to the inscriptions identifying the saints. John presumably commissioned the cross (Brussels 1982, no.Br. 16). There are two later inscriptions on both faces of the upper arm of the cross, mentioning two more donors: Leo Boreas (on the front) and George Syros (on the back). The recording of successive donors on processional crosses is not uncommon, as these objects were in use for a long period (Cotsonis 1994, pp.29–32).

Parallels for the writing on the cross exist in manuscripts and inscriptions dating from the second half of the tenth to the middle of the eleventh century (Spatharakis 1981, II, figs 58, 64, 80, 88, 91; Mundell Mango 1994, p.223). The iconography recalls the decoration of tenth- and eleventh-century reliquary crosses (Pitarakis 2006, pp.68 ff.). A contemporary processional bronze cross, now in Princeton, is the closest parallel in technique and script (Princeton 1986, no.68).

The representation of the Virgin Blachernitissa, in the honoured central position of the cross, indicates the major monument in which the cross was dedicated, the famous Church of the Virgin at Blachernai in Constantinople. The Virgin reproduces the type found on the marble icon at the Blachernai Palace which poured out miracle-working holy water (see also cat.194). Thus, the five figures on the reverse of the cross all evoke healing, indicating that the cross was dedicated by John in thanksgiving or in petition for good health (Athens 2000, no.41).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

190

Processional cross

Byzantium, probably twelfth century
Bronze, engraved and embossed, 68 × 46.3 × 2.6 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AD 2541
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lazović et al. 1977, p.36, no.24; Martiniani-Reber 2004

The cross is decorated on the front and the back. The inscriptions are peppered with spelling mistakes, which might indicate that it was manufactured outside Constantinople. The cross was restored before 1975. The front shows the Deposition from the Cross, with Christ (HC XC *sic*) supported by Joseph and Nicodemus, HOCHΦ and NHKOΔHMOC. Both Joseph and Nicodemus wear long robes elaborated with engraved lines, a decorative effect which stands in stark contrast to the simplicity of Christ's loincloth. The Archangel Michael appears in the lower part. His imperial garb seems to have been misunderstood; the *loros* characteristically worn by emperors is represented by a zigzag border. Below him the Archangel Raphael (PAΦAHΛ), whose wings are treated in a decorative manner, wears a deacon's long embroidered tunic (the dalmatic).

The lower arm of the cross shows the Visitation (O ACΠACMOC), with Mary (MP ΘY) and Elizabeth embracing one another. It is odd that the letters of the name Elizabeth are written backwards, EΛHCABET. The left arm of the cross shows an abbreviated Nativity (H ΓENHCHC). Mary (MP ΘY) and the Child lie in the same position and their identically shaped bodies bear a strange similarity to one another. The angel on the right is named ANKEΛOC (*sic*). The appearance to the three Marys (E [*sic*] MYPOΦOPE) appears on the right arm of the cross; the scene is so condensed that the angel foretelling the Resurrection is elided with the figure of Christ.

The reverse is surmounted by the Enthroned Christ holding the Gospels (HC XC). The iconography is not easy to read as the elements are so reduced. Below is the figure of the Archangel Uriel (OYPHHΛ), and another angel. The lower arm shows the Baptism, but treated in a strange fashion. The figures at the sides, the angel (ANKE) and John the Baptist (HOANHC), are strongly emphasised, whereas the figure of Christ appears cramped. John the Baptist wears not his usual pelt, but a mantle adorned with circular decorations.

On the left arm of the cross is an abbreviated Anastasis (H ANACTACHC). As he descends to Hades, Christ (HC XC) seeks out the Just of the Old Testament, represented here by Adam (AΔAM) and Eve (EBA). On the right arm the Entombment completes the cycle. Joseph (HOCHΦ) and Nicodemus (NHKOΔHMOC) carry the body of Christ, and make their way to the sepulchre, which is symbolised by a door.

The large size of this cross and its iconography, linked so closely to the story of Christ and particularly the Passion, may indicate that its function was to adorn a funerary chapel.

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

191

Processional cross

Constantinople or north-western Anatolia, late eleventh or early twelfth century
Silver, silver gilt, niello, iron core and bronze shaft, 73 × 39 cm

Musée de Cluny, Musée National du Moyen Âge, Paris, inv. no. CL. 23295
PROVENANCE: said to have been found near Eski chir in Turkey; bought at Christie's, London, 9 April 1987, lot 97
SELECTED REFERENCES: Caillet 1988; Paris 1988, no.11; Paris 1992, no.243, pp.329–30; New York 1997, no.26, pp.64–5

This processional cross is of Latin shape with flaring arms ending with a pair of spherical melon-shaped serifs. One side is worked in repoussé and highlighted with gilding, and the other is nielloed and gilded. The repoussé side bears five figural medallions forming a Deisis and a rinceau pattern emanating from the central medallion. Christ is at the top, the Virgin flanked by two archangels in the centre and John the Baptist at the bottom. The decoration of the other side is intended to emphasise the relationship between Incarnation and Salvation. The Crucifixion at the top dominates the central composition formed by the Virgin Hodegetria, flanked by the scenes of the Annunciation and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple on the side arms. The scene of the Virgin fed by an angel at the bottom of the Cross creates a short cycle from the Childhood of the Virgin, unusual subjects for metalwork (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1992, pp.136–67). Below is the figure of the kneeling donor with his dedicatory inscription in Greek: 'Deisis [or Supplication] of the monk Kosmas'.

The layout of the cross, its iconography and decorative techniques link it to a small group of eleventh- or early twelfth-century processional crosses, including the Adrianople cross at the Benaki Museum, Athens, the fragmentary cross at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio, the fragmentary pieces belonging to three crosses in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC, the cross at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the two crosses in the George Ortiz Collection, Geneva, and the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva, respectively, and the one in Matzhkvarichi (Svanetia) in Georgia, which is distinguished by its enamel medallions (Paris 1992, p.329; New York 1997, nos 23–5, 27, pp.59–64, 66–7; Cotsonis 1994, pp.46–54 and nos 2–3, 5, pp.68–78, 81–3). The Cluny cross is reported to have come from Eskişehir in north-western Anatolia, like the one in the Musée d'art et d'histoire, Geneva (Bank 1980, p.97; Mango 1988, pp.41–8). This might suggest the attribution of both pieces to a workshop located in this area, although a Constantinopolitan origin is possible.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

192

The Cross of Adrianople

Late tenth century
Silver sheets, with engraving, partial gilding and niello decoration, riveted around an iron core, 58.5 × 31 × 0.4 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no 33794
PROVENANCE: from Adrianople, where the cross was part of the ecclesiastical treasure of the Greek community, brought to Greece by refugees, following the Treaty of Lausanne, 1922
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bouras 1979, Athens 1994, no 87, p 264 (A. Drandaki); Sandin 1995, New York 1997, no 23, pp 59–60 (D. Katsarelias)

The cross of Adrianople (Edirne) is one of the best preserved of luxury processional crosses to have survived from the Middle Byzantine period. It is in the shape of a Latin cross, with small discs on the flaring ends of the arms. From the bottom projects a metal sheet, used both for affixing the cross in a stable socket and for carrying it in procession (Cotsonis 1994, pp.8–37). In the centre at the front is a circular receptacle for an object now lost, possibly a relic, now replaced by a representation of the Resurrection dating from after 1453. The central medallion is surrounded by four busts, at the ends of the cross arms. At the top is the Pantokrator and at the bottom is the Theotokos in prayer. On the horizontal arms are the Archangels Michael and Gabriel. Busts of saints decorate the small discs on the finials of the arms, the top left one of which has been lost and replaced by a rosette. Represented on the vertical arm are hierarchs: at the top right St John Chrysostom and below SS. Basil and Nicholas. No doubt St Gregory the Theologian was originally represented on the lost disc, completing the sequence of the most important Fathers of the Church. The small discs on the horizontal arm are occupied by the healing saints Kosmas and Damianos (to the left) and the soldier saints Sisinnios and Prokopios (to the right). On the back , in the honoured central position, is St John the Baptist, flanked by SS. Constantine and Helen, and by SS. George and Theodore.

The cross has two donor inscriptions. On the front: +K(YPI)E BOHΘI TON ΔOΛON COY CICINION AMHN (Lord, Help thy servant Sisinios, Amen). On the back: +YΠEP AΦECEOC AM(A)PTION TOY ΔOYAOY TOY Θ(EO)Y CICINIOY KE IΩANOY ΠPECBYTEPOY AM(HN) (For the remission of sins of the servant of God Sisinnios and John the Elder, Amen).

Most likely the central medallion on the front originally contained wood from the True Cross, as with other processional crosses of the period (Cotsonis 1994, pp.28–9; Sandin 1995, pp.63–6). The relic would have reinforced the protective potency of the cross and this is why the place of honour at the centre was not occupied by Christ or the Theotokos. The placing of St John the Baptist at the centre on the back suggests that the cross was a donation to a church dedicated to him (Bouras 1979, p.25).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

193

Gold cross with nielloed inscription

Eastern Mediterranean, eighth century (?)
Gold, niello, height (including suspension loop) 7.2 cm; width 4 cm; weight 42.10 g

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE AF 333
SELECTED REFERENCE: Dalton 1901, no.285, p.47, pl.IV

Gold cross with suspension loop, facetted arms and a central collet which would have originally contained a gem or glass paste. At the ends of the lateral arm and at the bottom of the vertical arm are three loops from which would have been suspended further gems (or perhaps the letters alpha and omega). On each arm of the cross is a nielloed Greek inscription: EM / OI / ΔE / MH / ΓE / NOI / TΩ (top); KAYXAC (left); ΘAIEIMH (right); EN / TΩ / CT / AY / PΩ / TOY / KY / HM / ΩM / IY XY (bottom) (Εμοι δε μη γενοιτο καυχασθαι ει μη εν τω σταυρω του K[υριο]υ ημων I[ησο]υ X[ριστο]υ; May God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ).

The text is a partial quotation from Galatians VI, 14, the missing second half of which continues: 'by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world'. Although the form of the cross can be compared with numerous Late Antique examples, the nielloed inscription is unparalleled. Gold crosses of this period often depict the crucified Christ flanked by busts of the Virgin, St John and the four Evangelists (Ross 2005, no.15, pp.21–2, pl.XXIII). The substitution of the figure of Christ for an inscription, and the emphasis placed by that inscription on the redemptive powers of the Cross, suggests that it may belong to the period of iconoclasm, when the Cross was one of the few images sanctioned by iconoclasts.

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

194

Pectoral reliquary cross

Eleventh century
Silver sheet, niello, 7.1 × 3.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. nos 21992, 21993, 21994
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1994, no 84, pp.261–2 (A.Drandaki); New York 1997, no.123, pp.172–3 (D. Katsarelias); Georgoula 1999, no.125, pp.332–3 (A.Ballian); Athens 2000, no.24, pp.309–10 (B. Pitarakis); Ravenna 2001, no.72, p.218 (A. Drandaki); Lisbon 2007, no.100, p.192 (A. Drandaki)

This silver pectoral reliquary cross, decorated with niello inlay, comprises two outer crosses, hinged together at the top and bottom by pins, containing an interior cross, with an opening intended to hold holy relics.

On the obverse is the Crucified Christ, wearing a long, sleeveless colobion, decorated with two vertical *clavi*. On the upper part of the cross is the abbreviated inscription IC XC, and on either side are the symbols of the sun and moon. On the reverse is the figure of the Virgin Orans standing on a pedestal, flanked by angels holding staffs. The hand of God appears above her. The combination of the Crucified Christ with the Virgin Orans emphasises the idea of the Incarnation of Christ through the Virgin for the salvation of humankind (Cotsonis 1994, pp.47–8). The soteriological message of the iconography suits well, and at the same time reinforces, the protective powers of the relics kept within the cross.

This cross belongs to a group of pectoral reliquaries that were particularly popular in the years after iconoclasm, from the ninth to the twelfth century. The most precious examples were made of gold, such as the famous Pliska reliquary cross (cat.53), or silver, as is the case with the Benaki Museum example. Nevertheless, the impressive number of surviving similar reliquaries, produced in cheaper copper alloys and found throughout the Byzantine realm, indicates that amuletic jewellery of this type was fashionable in all regions and among all social strata of Byzantium (Pitarakis 2006, *passim*).

The iconography of Mary on this reliquary is the same as the apse decoration of the Church of the Virgin Chalkeon at Thessaloniki, dated to 1028. Apparently, this iconographic type, known earlier, such as the ninth-century apse decoration of the Virgin of the Pharos at Constantinople (Mango 1958, p.182) or the contemporary miniature inserted in Ms Garrett 6 (New York 1997, pp.90–1, no.43 [K. Corrigan]), became increasingly popular during the eleventh century. The Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) issued coins with this image of the Virgin bearing the epithet Blachernitissa, thus relating it to the miraculous icon of the Blachernai Palace (Grierson 1973, pp.736, 745–7). The iconography of the Benaki Museum reliquary cross and the execution of its niello decoration suggest an eleventh-century date.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

195

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century
Copper alloy, 7.3 × 4.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.35552
PROVENANCE: former Prodromos Mellon Collection; gift of P.Mellon, May 1998
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2000, no.25, p.311; Pitarakis 2006, no.227, p.259

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross is an engraved version of cat.197. The Christ on the Cross, dressed in a colobion on the front side, is depicted alone, while the victorious formula I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C NHKA (Jesus Christ conquers) replaces the customary Gospel quotation. The reverse bears the image of the full-length standing figure of the Mother of God framed by three star motifs. The Virgin has both hands raised in prayer, while an inscription invoking her as Theotokos (ΘEOTOKE) is divided between the side arms. In the iconographic repertory of engraved copper-alloy crosses, the Virgin is glorified through the use of multiple descriptions which derive from church hymnography. Next to the universal 'Mother of God' are the appellations 'Mother of Christ' and 'Panagia', which are not common on more precious cult objects. The variety of names for the Virgin may have been forced on the artists by the lack of stylistic variety permitted by the copper-alloy surface.

The category of engraved copper-alloy pectoral crosses, combining the Crucifixion, on one side, with the Virgin Orans, on the other, appears to have gradually supplanted the crosses with moulded relief decoration in the course of the eleventh century. However, a distinctive type with relief decoration combining the naked figure of Christ on the Cross in a loincloth on one side, with the Hodegetria on the other, becomes popular during the twelfth century in Russia and the Balkans (Pitarakis 1996, pp.80, 237–41). The quality of drawing and workmanship of this example allows its attribution to an expert craftsman from a workshop probably located in Constantinople.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

196

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, eleventh century
Copper alloy, 8 × 4.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.35556
PROVENANCE: bought in Istanbul; former collection of Prodromos Mellon. Gift of P.Mellon, May 1998
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 2000, no.26, p.312; Pitarakis 2006, no.396, p.311, fig.611u on p.88

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross belongs to the same category as the two previous ones. The standing Virgin Orans on one side, topped by an inscription identifying her as Panagia (ΠANAΓIA) is flanked by two bust-length figures identified as Peter (ΠETPOC) and John (IOANHC). The other side is dominated by the standing figure of St Stephen (O AΓIOC CTEΦANOC), also praying and flanked by two stylised censers crowned with small crosses that emphasise his protective power. St Stephen has a high-ranking place in the repertory of saints found on bronze crosses. He is preceded by SS. George, John, Peter and the Archangel Michael (Pitarakis 2006, p.97 and Table 2, p.108). Even his name, meaning 'crown' and so referring to victory, enhances the apotropaic message of the Cross and the idea of victory against evil forces.

The ornamental patterns used on the costumes and attributes display a taste for triangular patterns which may have been inspired by the form of the capital 'alpha' found in the inscriptions. The distinctive pattern of a circle inscribed within a crosspiece and the stylised footwear of St Stephen recur on several crosses of this category and are used in representations of Christ, the Virgin and various saints (Pitarakis 2006, nos 335, 374, 407, 409, 464, 448, 482). The differences in quality of workmanship of these popular objects reflects the taste and different social levels of patronage in Byzantium.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

197

Pectoral reliquary cross

Constantinople or Anatolia, late tenth or eleventh century
Copper alloy, 9.5 × 5.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv no. 21990–91
PROVENANCE: Helen Stathatos Collection; entered Benaki Museum, Athens, 22 July 1970
SELECTED REFERENCES: Xyngopoulos 1951, no.33, p.46, pl.27; Athens 1994, no.81, p.259; Athens 2000, no.23, p.308 ; Pitarakis 2006, no.19, p.195

This copper-alloy pectoral reliquary cross has flaring arms and consists of two hollow sides forming a box-like interior for encasing relics. The upper hinge, in a fragmentary state, served for attaching a suspension loop (now lost). The relief decoration on both sides is obtained by casting in a mould, while the inscriptions, facial features and costumes are highlighted with deep engravings. The layout of the cross is intended to emphasise the themes of Incarnation and Salvation. The Christ crucified, dressed in a colobion on the front side, is flanked by the standing figures of the Mother of God and John the Evangelist, who are shown gesturing in his direction. The customary scriptural verses IΔE O YO(C) COY and IΔOY H MHTHP COY (Behold your son and Behold your mother [John XIX, 26–7]) are engraved below the outstretched arms of Christ, while the word Φ(Ω)C (Light), inserted between the sun and the moon above the *titulus*, emphasises cosmic participation in the event. The reverse bears the image of the full-length standing figure of the Mother of God in prayer. She is framed by the medallions of the four Evangelists, who are identified by the first letter of their name engraved outside the medallion.

Recent archaeological records have shown that rather than being Early Christian souvenirs from the Holy Land, as had long been accepted, the hundreds of crosses of this type belong to a production of the late tenth or eleventh centuries that was massively distributed in Constantinople and Anatolia as a response to an intensification of the cult of the True Cross and an increasing demand for different kinds of relics at all levels of society (Pitarakis 2006). Their iconography is inspired from that of more precious models in gold, enamel and nielloed silver. These crosses were probably acquired at pilgrimage shrines and monasteries that had become repositories for collections of relics. Examples whose contents survive contain bits of wood and bone fragments encased in balm, pebbles and earth.

BRIGITTE PITARAKIS

198

Votive hand holding a cross

Syria-Palestine, sixth–eighth century
Bronze, 24 × 10 cm; cross, 13 × 10 cm

Collection des Musées d'art et d'histoire de la Ville de Genève, inv. no. AA 2004-202
SELECTED REFERENCE: Martiniani-Reber 2005

The origins of the votive hand can be traced back to pagan Antiquity. For example, the Phrygian god Sabazios, son of Jupiter, was the object of a cult whose material manifestation consisted of bronze hands, sometimes adorned with pine cones, lizards, snakes or phalluses. Large numbers of these hands have been found in different parts of the Roman Empire. Other hands are linked to the cult of Jupiter Dolichenus (Boucher 1973, p.142, nos 220–1, Painter 1977, pp.16–17), or to that of Jupiter Keraunios. These cult objects are undoubtedly the precursors of Christian votive objects (New York 1979, pp.184–5 and François 2004).

Although a good number of examples of pagan votive hands have survived, only about a dozen Christian hands are known, and these are now spread between various museums in Europe and the United States (Ross 1964). This example, with its tapering fingers and hollow palm, offers characteristics similar to those of another votive hand, also in the Zakos Collection, among them its extremely slim appearance, accentuated by the elongation of the fingers and exaggerated hollow of the palm. The thumb is unusually thick and long by comparison with the other fingers.

The hand, which is in good condition, was evidently meant to be firmly affixed, as a nail can be spotted in the centre of the support, which has a further three cavities for nails. It is identical to an example now in the museum of the Kykko monastery in Cyprus (Perdikis 1998, p.17).

Where their provenance is known, all surviving Christian votive hands seem to be Middle Eastern in origin, supporting an attribution to workshops in Syria-Palestine which ceased work after the rise of Islam. However, some researchers attribute them to the workshops of Constantinople (Paris 1992, p.120, no.67).

MARIELLE MARTINIANI-REBER

199

Pectoral cross with Four Evangelists

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century
Gold, filigree, cloisonné and *champlevé* enamel, emeralds, tourmaline, pearls, 9 × 6 × 1 cm

State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, inv.II-162
PROVENANCE: probably from Kiev; later in Uvarov Collection, Moscow; State Historical Museum, Moscow, from 1924; State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, from 1933
SELECTED REFERENCES: Uvarova 1907, vol.6, no.3, pp.182–3; Frolow 1961, no.177, pp.255–6; Frolow 1965, no.177, pp.218, 227, 247; Bank 1966, no.180; Darkevich 1975, p.270; Moscow 1977, vol.2, no.539, p.80; Bank 1985, no.174, fig.on p.302; New York 1997, no.122, pp.171–2, fig.on p.171

The arms of the cross are decorated with round enamelled settings representing the four

Evangelists, St Matthew (top), St John the Theologian (bottom), St Luke (left) and St Mark (right). Red enamel inscriptions in Greek can be seen at the edges of these medallions. The missing central medallion probably depicted Christ blessing. The majority of the surface is adorned with floral and geometrical patterns. The Byzantine craftsman combined the cloisonné and *champlevé* enamel techniques and used a multicolour palette of black, white, red, green, yellow, dark- and light-blue enamels. The rolled filigree wire is very fine and the miniature images are highly detailed. The Evangelists' features, their hair, hands and garments, are varied and refined.

The high quality of the enamelling makes it possible that this cross was made in Constantinople. Boyd mentioned that the cross is comparable with some other objects executed in the second half of the eleventh century (New York 1997, p. 172). The original destination of this piece is unknown. Undoubtedly the cruciform cavity on the reverse was intended to house a certain relic and the loops on the vertical arm were used for hanging it. According to Kondakov, the cross had been adapted to become part of a votive crown or some other piece of complex jewellery (Kondakov 1892, pp. 170–1), but no precious objects of the Middle Byzantine period are known to contain similar details.

ELENA PILNIK

200

Lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin

Constantinople, first half of twelfth century

Lapis encrusted with gold, silver gilt, filigree, copper (the modern ring), wax resin, precious stones, one pearl, height 8.3 cm (10 with the ring); lapis: 6.4 × 4.3 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, MR 95
PROVENANCE: formerly in the treasury of the Abbey of Saint-Denis, mentioned for the first time in the abbreviated inventory of 1505, deposited in the Museum central des arts (the forerunner of the Louvre), 5 December 1793
SELECTED REFERENCES: Laborde 1853, no. 715; Barbet de Jouy 1865, pl. XI; Marquet de Vasselot 1914, no. 791, pl. LV; Paris 1931, no. 137; Montesquiou-Fezensac and Gaborit-Chopin 1973–77, vols 1 and 2, no. 40, vol. 3, pp. 46–7, pl. 29; Paris 1984, no. 352; Paris 1991, no. 39; Paris 1992, no. 133; New York 1997, no. 133

This twin-sided cameo is carved from lapis lazuli. With the famous Christ in the Moscow Kremlin Museum (New York 1997, no. 129), this is one of the finest surviving Byzantine cameos in this precious stone, seldom used by the Byzantines for making cameos or intaglios. One side depicts Christ blessing and the other the Virgin praying. The letters of the inscription, the haloes, the crosses on the Virgin's robe, the adornments on the book held by Christ and the two stylised bushes are all encrusted with gold. This process, reminiscent of the silver damascening process used on a group of brass doors in the eleventh century (cat. 265), is very rare on hard stone. The style of the relief carving fits a twelfth-century date, and the stylised design of the bushes can be paralleled in the first half of the twelfth century, notably with the enamelled foliages of the True Cross of Maria Comnene in Eine-Audenarde (Brussels 1982, o.21).

The mount in silver gilt originally had alternating pearls, turquoises and projecting filigree rosettes and the vanished edge metal strips had rows of pearls. The mount is hollow and filled with a dense wax resin to provide a measure of solidity. The bezels holding the pearls and turquoises, like those holding the filigree rosettes, were simply fixed with wax to the resin support, the metal having been cut away to accommodate them. This technique appears on the famous Jaucourt True Cross reliquary in the Louvre (Paris 1992, no. 249) and avoids the necessity for welding or soldering. The filigree rosettes recall those that were widespread in Byzantine marble sculpture from the eleventh century on, and in jewellery. So it is very likely that the mount, which does not resemble any surviving Byzantine metalwork of a later period, dates from the same period as the cameo, an exceptional circumstance for a Byzantine cameo dating from before the thirteenth century. Originally furnished with a ring, whose guide lugs still survive, the icon must have been attached to a chain which would have allowed it to worn as an *enkolpion*, or to be hung in a sanctuary or a princely chapel.

JANNIC DURAND

201

Reliquary *enkolpion*

Mid- to late tenth century (?)
Gold, silver gilt and cloisonné enamel, 3.8 × 3.2 × 0.6 cm

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. The Arthur and Margaret Glasgow Fund, 66.37.8
SELECTED REFERENCES: Richmond 1994, no. 41, pp. 116–19 (with earlier bibliography); New York 1997, no. 109, p. 159

This small quatrefoil reliquary consists of two enamelled plaques that form the exterior surfaces of a small container. Both sides are decorated with figures in cloisonné enamel. Inside the container is an attached small cross-shaped compartment for most likely a particle of the True Cross. On its obverse Christ (IC XC) stands in the centre in full height flanked by the busts of the Apostles Paul on the left and Peter on the right. Peter holds the cross staff and Paul a book. On the reverse in a similar composition the Virgin Mary stands in the centre in an orant position flanked by the busts of the Evangelists Luke and John. These two figures were probably chosen to flank her, since both had a direct relationship with her: Luke supposedly painted a portrait of the Virgin and John is the Apostle chosen by Christ while on the Cross, when he said 'this is your son' to her and 'this is your mother' to John, to take care of her after his death on the Cross. It is believed that she lived with him in Ephesus until her death. This all relates very neatly to the fact that this reliquary most likely contained a fragment of the Cross. Christ on the obverse with the two main Apostles represents the foundation of the Church through Peter and his teachings through Paul. All figures are identified by partial inscriptions placed awkwardly in red inferior lettering on the gold ground around them (a number of them have lost the enamel). Overall the craftsmanship of the enamel work is of low quality, although the use of colour in the garments belies this fact. Christ and the Virgin are clad in dark purple, the Apostles in hues of light- and dark-blue vertical alternating segments.

IOLI KALAVREZOU

202

Cameo with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, early thirteenth century (cameo); Serbia, Peć or Prizren, early seventeenth century (setting)
Jasper green, cutting; silver, hammering gilding; enamel (blue and green); carnelian, mother-of-pearl, glass paste, cameo length 4 cm; width 3.5 cm; setting length 7.2 cm; width 6 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 4588
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radojković 1969a; Paris 1983, no. 24; Popović 1983, pp. 7–51; Helsinki 2006, no. 5.1

The bust of Christ is executed on an ellipsoid olive-green piece of stone with red traces, in high relief, with powerful and exact cuts. The inscription (IC XC) is incised by plain strokes and Christ has a cruciform nimbus. His expression is peaceful, his hair long and parted. His garment (himation) covers the bust and its folds appear very soft. The right arm is raised in a sign of blessing. He holds a Gospel-book in his left hand; its covers are decorated with incised, simple small circles placed crosswise. This exquisite cameo forms a pair with the green jasper cameo depicting the Mother of God Orans, which is kept in the Serbian monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos. The identical material and manner of execution of both cameos and a story about the Mother of God Orans having been taken to Hilandar by St Sava, the first Serbian archbishop, makes it likely that the cameo with Christ discussed here has a similar history.

The fitting follows the shape of the cameo; it is ellipsoid and has cruciform bezels for cabochons of various colours. The front side of the fitting is decorated with stylised chickpea shoots whose leaves are executed in green and blue enamel. On the back, along the rim, runs the same ornamental decoration, and in the oval gilded medallion is the bust of the Mother of God (Theotokos-Oranta) in shallow relief with the initials (ΜΡ ΘΥ; IC XC). It should be noted that here the Mother of God has a long band over her arms representing her protecting veil.

The cameo was acquired by the Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, with the collection of Stanislav Simonović who bought it at Peć. The fitting was manufactured in Kosovo, and the cameo may have been used as a pectoral icon by a priest connected with Dečani or the Peć Patriarchate.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIĆ

203

Pendant with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople (?), eleventh or twelfth century in a sixteenth-century mount
Rock crystal, gold, precious stones, pearls (mount), 6.1 × 6 × 1.2 cm (including mount)

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2113
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 114, p. 199; Dallas 1990, pp. 84–5, pl. 65; Athens 1994, no. 79, p. 257, pl. 79; Georgoula 1999, no. 130, pp. 349–51, fig. 264

Represented in relief at the centre of this octagonal rock-crystal medallion is Christ Pantokrator, in bust. The inscription IC XC O ΠΑΝΤΟΚΡΑΤΩΡ frames Christ, who has a cross nimbus and holds a closed book in his left hand and blesses with his right. The elegant proportions and face of Christ link the medallion with a series of hard-stone cameos with busts of holy figures, in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1962, no. 120), Paris (Paris 1992, nos 186, 191, 201, 202), State Historical Museum, Moscow, and the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Bank 1985, p. 298, no 155, 156), which date from the tenth to the twelfth centuries. It is a powerful image despite the low relief and the abstract effect of the transparent material.

Rock crystal, a stone accredited with magical-curative properties in the Byzantine world (Psellus, *Philosophica*, p. 118), was used widely in Islam and the West, mainly in larger objects of sacred or secular character, such as reliquaries and lamps (Hahnloser and Brugger-Koch 1985; Shalem 1994). Although the surviving Byzantine artefacts in 'cold stone', as it was named characteristically in Byzantium, dated after the sixth century are very few (Mundell Mango 2003, pp. 368–9, 372), the texts confirm their existence during the Middle and Late Byzantine periods too. Two epigrams by Manuel Philes (thirteenth century) refer to rock-crystal icons of Christ (Philes, *Carmina*, I: pp. 65–6, II: p. 38), as well as one other *enkolpion* with the image of Christ, in the same material, which is dated to the eleventh century, showing the wide popularity of this type of image (London 1987A, no. 32).

Originally the medallion was intended to adorn a larger object, such as the cover of a holy book or a reliquary, or the frame of an icon, as is indicated by the cylindrical protuberance on its back. The precious material, the quality of the craftsmanship and, very possibly, its value as an heirloom led a sixteenth-century owner to incorporate it into a pectoral ornament by setting it in the intricate mount of gold, precious stones and pearls that it has today.

VASSILIKI FOSKOLOU

204

New Testament, folio 178*v*

Mid-twelfth century, Constantinople
Parchment, 20.5 × 15.5 cm, III + 431 folios
Contents: Eusebios' letter to Carpianus (17*r*–17*v*); Four Gospels (24*r*–222*r*), Acts (232*r*–287*r*), Catholic Epistles (287*bis r*–312*r*), Pauline Epistles (313*r*–424*r*), the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed (425*r*), with lists of Gospel pericopes for immovable and movable feasts of the year (15*r*–16*v*), lists of Epistle pericopes for the movable and immovable feasts of the year (224*bis*–230*r*)
Binding: the silver cover, produced in Nuremberg and inscribed with the name of the book's eighteenth-century owner, Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach, bears a tenth-century Byzantine ivory plaque with the Enthroned Christ Pantokrator

Bodleian Library, Oxford, Auct. T. inf. I. 10 (Misc. 136; S.C. 28118)
PROVENANCE: at the Hodegon monastery in 1391 and still in Constantinople in 1535, the book was acquired 'from the East' by Hieronymus Wilhelm Ebner von Eschenbach (1673–1752), the State Archivist in Nuremberg; sold to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, on 19 November 1819 at the auction house Payne and Foss
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, p. 307, no. 296, fig. 296; Meredith 1966, pp. 419–24 with earlier bibliography; London 1994, pp. 162–3, no. 178

Named after its eighteenth-century owner, the Codex Ebnerianus is among the finest illuminated books from twelfth-century Byzantium and the most meticulously painted of the so-called Kokkinobaphos group of Constantinopolitan books (see also cat. 59). Illuminated New Testaments are rarer in Byzantium than illuminated Gospels, and survive above all from the twelfth century, presumably in response to the period's vogue for private devotional volumes with New Testament content. The Codex Ebnerianus is striking among them for its imaginative energy, seen both in its effulgent ornament and in its extension through Acts and the Epistles of the iconographic formula used in many twelfth-century Gospel-books, pairing a sacred author with a feast icon. The manuscript has played a key role in scholars' understanding of the luxury book trade in both twelfth- and fourteenth-century Constantinople.

Long assigned by its sheer quality to the very beginning of the twelfth century, the book belongs on the basis of its script to the mid-century, thus shattering the conception of the Kokkinobaphos group as a coherent scriptorium slowly devolving from initial brilliance to dry repetitiveness. The group is no longer interpreted as a scriptorium, but rather as an artistic manner practised by one or more painters working with different scribes and patrons and varied levels of financial investment. At the end of the fourteenth century, the Ebnerianus was in the Hodegon monastery, where the scribe Joasaph altered it for liturgical use. There its illumination must have provided a model for a late-fourteenth-century book now in Venice (Biblioteca Marciana I. 8), thus clarifying what had seemed an oddly late coda to the otherwise entirely twelfth-century Kokkinobaphos group.

ANNEMARIE WEYL CARR

205

Lectionary with the Last Supper, folio 9*v*

Constantinople or Asia Minor, around 900
Parchment, 32.8 × 26.5 cm

National Library of Russia, St Petersburg, cod. gr. 21
SELECTED REFERENCES: Likhachova 1977, pp. 5–10; Lektionar 1994

This is one of the earliest manuscripts after iconoclasm and the text is written in uncials. Only sixteen folios survive, and this is in part by chance. The leaves were found bound into a twelfth-century manuscript which in 1858 the Bishop of Trebizond presented to Tsar Alexander II. When it entered the imperial library these folios were taken out and listed as gr. 21. A sixteenth page with the Baptism was later found by A. Papodopoulos-Kerameus in Trebizond, and this was purchased by the library and files as gr. 21a.

The Last Supper is an example of the arrangement of the book. Below the scene painted within an imbricated border is the reading for Holy Thursday, starting with Matthew XXVI, 20. In the painting, Christ and the Apostles are sitting inside a building around a sigma-shaped table, which was the form encountered in Early Byzantine manuscripts, such as the sixth-century Sinope Gospels (cat. 49), suggesting that the artists had access to a manuscript that had escaped destruction during iconoclasm, or else were influenced by the artists of the ninth- and tenth-century wall paintings in the rock-cut churches of Cappadocia, who also painted imagery which partly reflects earlier models and partly has the new ideas which were developed after iconoclasm. Christ, on the extreme left, is in the position of honour and breaks the bread. Peter reclines opposite him, stretching out his hands like the eleven others. Judas, dark-haired, sits upright at the front, his hand touching his mouth. The bowl on the table contains a fish, the symbol of Christ.

The fragmentary 'Trebizond Gospels' includes a portrait of St Mark, the Baptism, the Marriage at Cana, the Doubting of Thomas, Christ's Appearance to the Marys, and the Washing of Feet. It may have been painted in Constantinople, but several scholars have preferred to see it as 'provincial' work. In this respect it is important evidence for understanding how art was revived after iconoclasm and how far Byzantine art was created in Constantinople or was a much broader geographical development.

ROBIN CORMACK

206

Icon with the Annunciation and saints

Late twelfth century
Gilt-silver sheet, chased and repoussé, 31 × 27 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 36272
SELECTED REFERENCES: Drandaki 2001; Baltoyanni 2003, pp. 125–6

This Annunciation is a rare survival of an all-metal icon, described in sources as 'αργυραί διάχρυσοι', or 'ολοτξάπωτοι' or 'ολοκόσμητοι'. Gabriel approaches the Virgin with his hand raised in blessing. The Virgin Mary confronts him standing. Her house functions as a frame that surrounds and emphasises her figure. A smaller

building is depicted behind Gabriel. From a quadrant filled with stars at the top left corner, the hand of God emerges, and rays of light descend. The border has elaborate leaf-scrolls, enclosing palmettes. The background of this rich vegetal ornamentation is finely punched.

In the top and bottom borders, six now empty roundels would originally have held silver or enamel medallions. In the vertical borders the rinceaux are interrupted by two rectangular silver plaquettes with the portraits of saints, possibly the Apostles Peter and Luke, in a different scale and style. Technical examination has verified that Luke on the right is a later addition.

The double scrolls surrounding the palmettes on the border are encountered in firmly dated twelfth–early thirteenth-century manuscripts (Likhachova 1977, p.35; Spatharakis 1981, figs 220, 227, 253, 273; New York 1997, no.46, p.93 [J.C.Anderson]). The closest parallel to the Benaki Annunciation is to be found in the silver-gilt cover of a Constantinopolitan reliquary in the Louvre, Paris, depicting the Marys at the Tomb, which dates from the second half of the twelfth century (Paris 2001B, pp.73–7, no.20 [J.Durand]). A dating in that period for the Benaki silver icon is further suggested by the imposing depiction of the hand of God sending divine rays towards the Virgin, a feature of the iconography of the Annunciation that became popular during that period, inspired by the theological debates of the time (Kitzinger 1984, pp.99–115).

An almost identical composition is repeated on the border of the late thirteenth-century silver revetment of the Virgin and Child icon from the Monastery of Zarzma, Georgia (Velmans 2002, pp.317–23), suggesting that the two representations, despite their different date, scale and quality, are clearly dependent on a common model.

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

207

Handle of a standing censer (*katzion*)

Constantinople, *c.*1300
Bronze, cast with engraved decorative detail, 28.6 × 21 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no.11402
SELECTED REFERENCES: Veglery 1909–10, pp.327–36; Bouras 1981, pp.68–9; Brussels 1982, no.Br. 29 (L. Bouras); Athens 1994, no.89 (A. Drandaki); Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, fig.427; Athens 2000, pp.362–3, no.42 (A. Drandaki); New York 2004, p.128, no.64 (A. Drandaki)

The large ogee-shaped handle depicts the Virgin Hodegetria holding Christ. The background is decorated with incised foliate scrolls, terminating in three- or five-lobed palmettes and semi-palmettes and enclosing engraved inscriptions ΜΗΡ ΘΕΟΥ Η ΘΕΡΑΠΙΩΤΗCA and IC XC. The representation has parallels in late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century metalwork (Athens 2000, no.42 [A. Drandaki]).

The handle belongs to a type of free-standing censer known as *katzion* or *katsion*, and mentioned in monastic charters (typika) from the eleventh century (Gautier 1981, p.91, col. 1222). Such censers are seen in representations of the Dormition of the Virgin or of saints, and so have been associated with funeral rites – a *katzion* was indeed found in a tomb at Mistra (Xyngopoulos 1930, pp.129–30; Drandakis 1952, p.504, fig.10). But they also appear in processional scenes involving icons, implying a wider ritual usage (Ševčenko 1995, fig.6). The possibility of other uses for this type of censer is suggested by the existence of similarly shaped incense burners with secular decoration, pointing to a domestic rather than ecclesiastical environment (Byzantine Museum 2005, p.318, no.307).

The broad handles of such censers usually depicted the patron saint of the church where the vessel was to be used, suggesting this example came from a church of the Virgin Therapiotissa. A text of 1394 in the *Acta Patriarcharum* mentions the theft of silver – presumably the revetment – from the venerable icon of the Virgin Therapiotissa (Miklosich and Müller 1860–90, p.203; Oikonomides 1991, p.39). This confirms the existence of a devotional icon of that name which is reproduced in the *katzion*. The location of this icon can be identified with the Constantinopolitan Church of the Virgin Therapiotissa recorded in 1348–49 by the Russian pilgrim Stephen of Novgorod (Majeska 1981, pp.359–65; Majeska 2002, p.104).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

208

Plaque with St George

Asia Minor, fourteenth century
Bronze, gilded, hammered and engraved, silver, 10 × 9.5 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no.X 1567
SELECTED REFERENCE: Chatzidakis and Scampavias 2007, no.99, p.106 (C. Scampavias)

The almost square plaque has an appliqué banded frame of silver, without gilding and with large foliate ornaments. The original hook for hanging the icon is preserved at the top. The condition is good, and most of the gilding has survived, but the lower right corner of the frame is missing. The inscription reads: Ο Α(ΓΙΟC) / ΓΕ/Ο/Ρ/ΓΙ/Ο/C // Ο / Φ/Α/Τ/ΡΙ/Α/Ν/Ο/C (Saint George the Phatrian).

St George is on horseback with his head and torso *en face*, while his steed trots to the right. He wears full armour and a cloak fastened on the right shoulder, next to the neck, covering his left shoulder and fluttering behind the right arm. Below the chest is the *cingulum* tied in a knot. The imbrications on the breastplate are lozenge-shaped. In his left hand he holds the reins and in the right a spear, the tip of which reaches to the right upper corner of the plaque. His head is large in proportion to his body. The round youthful face has regular and refined features. On his thick curly hair is a diadem consisting of a row of medallions. The halo is lightly embossed. The relief is executed in hammered technique. The details on the garments, the horse's mane and the inscription are incised.

The shape of certain letters in the inscription, particularly the A, is rather archaic; however, the rendering of the imbrications on the breastplate indicates a date in the fourteenth century. The epithet Phatrian derives from a famous shrine of the saint, at Phatre in Paphlagonia, which was named 'the Phatrynon', after the place (ΤΙΒ 9, 148 and 260).

MICHELE BACCI

209

Plaque with St Niketas

Thirteenth century
Bronze, hammered, gilded, incised, 7.3 × 6.4 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no.X 1091
SELECTED REFERENCE: Chatzidakis and Scampavias 2007, no.97, p.104 (C. Scampavias)

The greater part of the gilding is preserved and there is little damage to the surface. The border band on the lower edge is missing. The repoussé inscription on each side of the halo reads: Ο/Α/ΓΙ/Ο/C // ΝΙ/ΚΗ/ΤΑ/C (Saint Niketas). On either side of the shoulders, the incised inscription reads: ΑΓΙΕ / ΝΙΚΗ/ΤΑ ΒΟ/ΗΘΕΙ / ΤΩC/(Ω) // ΔΟΥ/ΛΩ Ο/Χ/Μ (Saint Niketas help thy servant Ο Ch Μ). The letters Ο Χ Μ, with which the incised inscription concludes, have not been deciphered.

The figure is framed by a narrow, slightly raised band. The saint is portrayed to the waist and in frontal pose, with both hands in front of the chest. In his right hand he holds a martyr's cross and with the left he venerates, with the palm outwards. His facial features are handsome and regular, with a thin straight nose, large eyes and small mouth. His luxuriant curly hair falls on his shoulders and his beard is relatively short and rounded. He wears a courtly cloak with *tablion*, which is fastened above the right shoulder with a round fibula and leaves the right arm free. Visible on the part of the shoulder not covered by the cloak is part of the *maniakes* (a gold-embroidered or sometimes gold ornament of the costume, which surrounded the neckline and continued onto the shoulders). *Maniakes* and *tablion* are decorated with engraved lozenges and tiny roundels, denoting the embroidery and the pearls that embellished them. Encircling the saint's head is an incised halo.

The elegant feature and modelling of the body suggest a date in the thirteenth century. The only discordant note is the disproportionately small right arm.

MICHELE BACCI

210

Chalice veil

Late thirteenth–early fourteenth century
Silk embroidered with silver and gilded silver thread, 63.5 × 63.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no.9320
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou 1929, fig.14, Vei Chatzidaki 1953, 3–4, pls A–B; Athens 1964, no.583, pp.435–6, New York 2004, no.186, pp.310–11 (A.Ballian)

This veil depicts the *Metalepsis* (partaking of wine), which forms part of the representation of the Communion of the Apostles. Christ holds in his right hand a jewelled chalice, flanked by two seraphim instead of the usual angels, and stands behind the altar, which is covered by a cloth decorated with cross-shaped gammatia (corner-pieces). Above is an impressive hemispherical ciborium edged with red moulding and supported on double colonnettes.

A similar veil must originally have depicted the *Metadosis* (distribution of bread), as other early surviving chalice and paten veils come in pairs with complementary representations such as those in Halberstadt and Castell'Arquato (Johnstone 1967, ills 85–8; Millet 1947, pls CLIV–CLV). On the Benaki veil Christ is shown from the front, as in the apse of St Sophia in Ohrid and the chalice veil in Chilandar monastery (Bogdanović, Djurić and Medaković 1978, fig.101), but the portrayal is exceptionally plain and strikingly intense. The Apostles are not depicted and on the altar cloth are two crosses instead of the Communion vessels (see Rome 2000D, no.78, pp.212–13).

Stylistically the compact, almost square figure of Christ recalls the style of painting found in Constantinople and Thessaloniki between 1290 and 1310. The pale colour and the calm features of Christ recall the Pantokrator in the Protaton, depicted on the marble *proskynetarion*, which, like the ciborium on the veil, is supported on a double colonnette with relief ornamentation painted red (Teteriatnikov 1999, p.103, fig.2). Around the veil the non-accented liturgical inscription (Matthew XXVI, 26–8) is written in 'distinctive, epigraphic majuscule'. This type of script, common in the Middle Byzantine era, underwent a striking revival in some late thirteenth-century manuscripts. Also typical of earlier manuscripts and metalwork is the direction of the inscription, which starts at the top of the frame, continues on the right side and then on the left, and terminates at the bottom.

ANNA BALLIAN

211

Gospels with the Passion of Christ, folio 89*v*–90*r*

Constantinople, second half of eleventh century
Parchment, 30 × 23.2 cm

Biblioteca Palatina di Parma, Ms. Pal. 5
PROVENANCE: Monastery of San Salvatore, Messina, between 1296–08 and 1229; Biblioteca Buonvisi, Lucca; collection of Karl Ludwig of Bourbon-Parma shortly after 1824; Biblioteca Palatina, Parma, since 1865
SELECTED REFERENCES: Foti 1992, p.78; Eleuteri 1993, pp.3–13, pls 1–4 (G.Fiaccadori), with full retrospective bibliography (P. Eleuteri); Parma 2001, no.57, pp.268–72 (G. Fiaccadori); Worm 2002–03, p.104

This luxury set of the Gospels with the use of gold leaf in many portions of the text and a high standard of illuminations (some now flaked) can be ascribed to Constantinople in the eleventh century. The text of the Gospels is written in a script known as *Perlschrift*, while other passages such as titles are in Alexandrian or in epigraphic capitals. It resembles the contemporary but smaller book, E.D.Clarke Ms. 10 in the Bodleian Library (Parma 2001, p.270 [G. Fiaccadori]), while various details of the decoration direct us to a well-documented area of manuscript production whose output includes, among others, Vat. Gr.1156 (Rome 2000B, p.247 [F.D'Aiuto]), with which this shares some features, including the layout into squares of the scenes depicted in folios 11*v*–12*r* and 89*v*–90*v*, and also the red and blue fabrics in the full-page miniature depicting the Evangelists, or indeed the decoration in *Blütenblattstil* of the opening pages; these consist of New Testament scenes painted inside quadrilobes. The layout of folio 90*r* shows the high density of illustrations on the page, with the sequence from the Agony in the Garden, the Betrayal by Judas and Denial of Peter to the Crucifixion and taking Christ down from the Cross, all the pictures framed by a luxuriant decorative border.

The manuscript came to Malta from Constantinople between 1206–08 and 1229, as is documented by a series of annotations (Fiaccadori, in Eleuteri 1993), and before 1470 was transferred to the Monastery of San Salvatore *de lingua phari* in Messina, as is clearly shown by folios 1–3, now detached and preserved with the earlier binding. These pages formed part of a manuscript from which folios 278*r*–281*v* of another manuscript (Messan. gr. 98 [Foti 1992]) also came. Next, the Gospels were in the Biblioteca Buonvisi in Lucca, and then entered the collection of Karl Ludwig of Bourbon-Parma shortly after 1824. The manuscript has been the property of the Biblioteca Palatina in Parma since 1865, when Karl Ludwig's library was acquired.

SILVIA SCIPIONI

212

Epitaphios of Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes

Constantinople, Thessaloniki or the Peloponnese, 1406/07
Crimson silk with silver, silver-gilt, and coloured threads, 85 × 140 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 8278-1863
PROVENANCE: Sicily; recorded in 1756 as having come from Sicily in 1628 to the Monastery of the Santi Apostoli in Naples; bought by the museum from Canon Franz Bock in 1863
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, no.226, pp.211–12 (H. Granger-Taylor); New York 2004, no.190, pp.316–17 (W. T. Woodfin)

This rich embroidery was an Epitaphios (or *Grand Aer*). Starting in the early fourteenth century, as part of the symbolism of the Easter ceremonies marking the death and resurrection of Christ, the Epitaphios was used in the Byzantine ritual of Good Friday and Holy Saturday, and placed on the altar table for the rest of the Paschal season until Ascension Day. At Vespers on Good Friday the Epitaphios was taken from the altar and set up in the centre of the church and decorated to symbolise the tomb of Christ. The faithful mourned at the Epitaphios until Matins on Holy Saturday. It was then carried in solemn procession outside the church, brought back in and laid on the altar in preparation for the joyful liturgy at midnight.

This Epitaphios represents the dead Christ on the stone of unction (a relic kept in the monastery of the Pantokrator at Constantinople since the twelfth century), holy angels in stoles on each side with liturgical fans, and the four Evangelists in the corners. The background is filled with a symbolic decoration of a scrolling vine (an unusual feature). The evocations of the Epitaphios are recalled in the Greek inscriptions around the border, which come from the *troparia* (hymns) for Easter: 'The noble Joseph, taking down your spotless body from the wood and wrapping it in a clean shroud with aromatic spices, carefully laid it in a new tomb' and 'The ointments used for human beings are lying here, but Christ after suffering death has shown himself again in another form.' A third inscription records the donation of the embroidery: 'Prayer of the servant of God Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes with his wife and children in the year 6915, indiction 15 [= 1406/07]'. This name is known as among the ruling classes of Late Byzantine Morea, and he may have been based at Monemvasia – he is probably the man of this name who was the imperial ambassador to the Venetians in 1416 and representative at the Council of Constance from 1414 to 1417. The cloth was presumably a gift to a church in the region of Monemvasia.

ROBIN CORMACK

213

Wall tile with an image of St Nicholas

Probably Constantinople, tenth century
Coloured and transparent glazes on white ceramic, 16.8 × 16.4 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv.48.2086.1

214

Wall tile with an image of St Arethas

Probably Constantinople, tenth century
Coloured and transparent glazes on white ceramic, 17.2 × 17.1 cm

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, inv.48.2086.2

PROVENANCE: discovered in Asia Minor close to Istanbul, *c.*1930; purchased by Nikos Avgheris, Istanbul, *c.*1952; purchased by Robert E. Hecht Jr., Rixmos MD, 1956; purchased by the Walters Art Gallery (now Walters Art Museum), 1956
SELECTED REFERENCES: Coche de la Ferté 1957B, pp.213–14; Athens 1964, nos 599–600, pp.490–91 and 566 (D. Talbot-Rice); New York 1997, no.10, pp.43–4 (E. Maguire); Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001, nos A.19 and A.22, pp.47–50, 252 and 254 (S. Gerstel), with bibliography

These tiles, not necessarily unearthed together, come from two separate sets of uniform half-length images of saints labelled in Greek as

Nicholas, Paraskeve and James in one case, and Arethas (LCI, vol.5, cols 242–3), Basil and Panteleimon in the other. Their brittle, thinly glazed ceramic is not weather-resistant, hence they must originally have been attached to the inside walls or stone furniture of a building, most probably a church. Neither set survives complete. The one with St Nicholas is likely also to have included ornamented squares, now lost, that alternated with the figural ones. Composed of both vertical and horizontal strips, this set may have framed a larger holy image, perhaps rendered in mosaic or carved in marble (compare New York 1997, nos 233 and 303, pp.345 and 465). The series that includes the martyr Arethas (d. 523) could have lined an interior cornice, possibly that of an altar screen.

The images here are drawn and coloured in a technique typical of a rare variety of Byzantine glazed pottery ('Type I' in Sanders 2001) that archaeologists find in tenth- or eleventh-century strata. Similar tiles have been excavated in Istanbul at two churches dated 907 and 920–22, respectively (Gerstel and Lauffenburger 2001, pp.189–99), and at various places in Preslav, capital of Bulgaria from 893 to 969 (New York 1997, nos 222–3, pp.329–30; Rome 2000D, nos 50–5, pp.156–62). The vegetal ornament repeated above and below the image of St Nicholas also occurs in tenth-century Byzantine book illumination (Spatharakis 1981, nos 17–20, 41, figs 39, 42, 46, 80). The artist, probably trying his brush for future work, lightly sketched the curves of another similar motif on the back of the St Nicholas tile.

GEORGI R. PARPULOV

215

The Raising of Lazarus

Twelfth century
Egg tempera on wood, 21.5 × 24 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 980
PROVENANCE: purchased from a private collection
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann et al. 1965, pp.XXIV, LXXXIII, no.37; Athens 1986, no.74 (M. Chatzidakis); Athens 1986, no.26 (M. Chatzidakis); London 1987B, no.7 (M. Chatzidakis); Balsimore 1988, no.8 (M. Chatzidakis); Vocotopoulos 1995, no.30; New York 1997, no.67B (A. Weyl Carr); Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, no.2

The imposing figure of Christ, who addresses Lazarus by outstretching his hand, dominates the composition. Behind him are the Apostles Peter and Andrew, who converse in front of a mountain on the far left of the work. On the right, Lazarus appears, risen from the dead, in the open door of the monument, swathed in bandages, which a young Jew tries to unwind. At the back, three onlookers follow the scene. Lazarus's two sisters, Martha and Mary, kneel on the ground and beseech the Lord. The red ground and the absence of landscape make the icon particularly striking. Christ and Lazarus each have a blue halo. There is considerable damage to the lower part of the icon.

Common stylistic traits, the same dimensions and the vivid red of the ground are found in two other icons, *The Transfiguration* in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (Chatzidakis 1964–65, pp.386, 388) and *The Last Supper* in the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos (Tsigaridas 1996, p.362). All three icons are the work of the same painter and come from Mount Athos. Originally they decorated the epistyle of a templon screen and must have formed part of a series of the twelve main festival scenes of the church. This is one of the earliest surviving examples of such a beam, now cut into separate pieces.

The composition is limited to the essential figures. The monumental character of the work and its style fits a dating in the twelfth century.

KALLIOPI-PHAIDRA KALAFATI

216

Epistyle fragment with the Transfiguration of Christ

Mount Athos, first half of the twelfth century
Chestnut wood, gesso and tempera, 23.2 × 23.7 × 2.5 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv. no.1-7
PROVENANCE: the cell of St Prokopios or Monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos; brought from Mount Athos by Peotr Sevastyanov, 1860; Museum of Old Russian Art at the Imperial Academy of Fine Art, St Petersburg, 1861–98; State Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 1898–1930, then transferred to the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no.B-86, pp.102–4 with full bibliography (Y. Piatnitsky); Piatnitsky 2004, pp.298, 299, 311; Etinghof 2005, no.13, pp.584–7; Helsinki 2006, no.1.1, pp.161–2 (Y. Piatnitsky); Piatnitsky 2006A, p.30; Tsigaridas 2006, p.39

The Gospel scene of the Transfiguration is here treated in the same way as in several other Middle Byzantine works, and is particularly close to the mid-twelfth-century mosaic version in the Cappella Palatina, Palermo. The composition is calm and simple. The use of blue haloes is found also in manuscript painting and cloisonné enamels.

Originally this icon was not a separate panel but formed part of a wide epistyle beam with the Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church which belonged to the screen of a church on Mount Athos. It was taken to Russia in 1860. Three other icons from this same epistyle are now found in various places. *The Raising of Lazarus* (cat.215) is in the Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, and two others, *The Last Supper* and *The Nativity of Christ*, remain in the Monastery of Vatopedi, Mount Athos. All four have been sawn from the same board and are of approximately the same size. The fairly rare red background, certain similarities in the portrayal of Christ and the saints, and the consistent style and technique all testify beyond doubt that the same artist painted these icons and that they originally formed a single ensemble.

Although this epistyle was evidently made on Mount Athos, as is indicated by the use of chestnut wood, it is the product of an artist who clearly had knowledge of the most current ideas in Constantinople. The epistyle is agreed to be of the twelfth century, and the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, catalogues it as belonging to the first half.

YURI A. PYATNITSKY

217

Incense burner

Serbia, Janjevo, fourteenth century
Bronze, casting, openwork, 11 × 12.5 × 3.05 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no.161
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radojković 1977B; London 1981, no.43; Milovanović 1985, no.310; Paris 1985, no.53; Helsinki 2006, no.5.3

Incense burners fall into three main categories: free-standing, hand-held or chain-mounted. This example consists of a large decorated handle and an attached circular thurible or censer (to which bells, now lost, would originally have been attached). Its openings are in the form of keyholes or circles and it has a simple Greek cross on the top. The handle is decorated with a Tree of Life in openwork. It has five stylised lilies and two pairs of pecking birds facing each other; in the centre there is a heart-shaped ornament consisting of floral shoots with a large trefoil lily which might be interpreted as the Tree of Life.

Incense burners were used in churches and in the home. Unique to Serbia was a ceremony – *slava* – in which frankincense was used. This type of incense burner with a handle is documented on Mount Athos and was used there during the silent prayers of monks, during vigils and midnight services when a priest or deacon would incense the worshippers and icons and walk around the temple almost in silence. The container could also be shaken during festivals to enhance the joyful atmosphere of the church with bells and incense.

This incense burner was probably manufactured in one of the Serbian mining centres where large workshops operated. It was found in Janjevo, an important Serbian medieval town. Two similar incense burners are known, one found at Prilep with a Tree of Life in the centre and with birds and dolphins next to it, and another at Mistra decorated with lilies. The decoration of the three incense boxes symbolically represents the Eucharist, with birds receiving Communion from the Tree of Life.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIĆ

218

Brass lamp

Eastern Mediterranean (?), fifth–sixth century
Brass, 27 × 7.9 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1879.0524.1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.501, pl.XXVII; Bailey 1996, on: 03834 MLA, p.79, pl.XCI

This brass lamp contains a central filler-hole and a circular wick-hole with a scalloped rim. The carinated body is decorated on either side with a monogrammed cross, from the arms of which hang an alpha and an omega. The handle has a double-ribbed collar and flares to a six-sided flower with knobs at its points. The lamp has two suspension lugs and a bayonet-fitting for a stand in its base.

The decorative cross on either side of the body is a form of Christogram, a monogrammatic abbreviation of Christ's name, and symbolic of Christ's triumph. The presence of the alpha and omega, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, is a direct allusion to Revelations I, 11 – 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last…'. Similar lamps are known from Stobi in Macedonia, the north Pontic area and Syria (Bailey 1996, p.79).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

219

Oil lamp

Egypt, sixth century
Quaternary alloy, cast in parts, covered with green patina, 32.1 × 25.5 × 19.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no.11509
PROVENANCE: Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: Brussels 1982, no.Br 7 (L. Bouras); Delivorrias and Fotopoulos 1997, no.314; Xanthopoulou 1997, vol.1, p.41, vol.2, p.185, no.LA 15.003

This lamp stands on a high ring base decorated with pierced-work rinceaux. There is no socket for a lamp-stand nor hoops for affixing hanging chains. The body is long, with a ridge around the edge on the sides. The flat upper surface is decorated in low relief with a vine plant growing from a vessel. The wick-hole is circular with two small protuberances close to the lower end of the nozzle. The circular filling hole originally had a swivel lid, of which only the double attachment loops are preserved.

All that remains of the reflector is the lower part, a metal strip with a single row of five pearls. Attached to the upper part is a clumsily cut piece of metal, on which was nailed at a later phase a large cross of Maltese type, which now functions as the reflector of the lamp. It bears the dotted inscriptions: Ω ΑΓΙΩC ΑΠΑ ΓΕΡΑΝΝΟC (St Apa Gerannos) and Α(ΓΙΟΣ) ΙΩCΥΠΩ(Σ) ΠΡΥCΒΗΤΕ(ΡΟΣ) (St Josepos the Elder). From the lower end of the cross projects a metal sheet, which recalls processional crosses. This was possibly its original purpose (Xanthopoulou 1997, vol.2, p.185).

Both the pearls visible on the surviving part of the original reflector and the decoration of the foot of the lamp with pierced-work rinceaux are recurrent traits of Egyptian copper working in the fifth and sixth centuries. A bowl with a foot bearing comparable pierced-work decoration was found in grave B37 at Ballana, which has been dated to AD 440–50 (Török 1988, pl.86). A similar body with a pierced-work foot is encountered on a lamp of Egyptian provenance in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg; its reflector is decorated with a vine (Moscow 1977, vol.1, pp.186–7, no.395).

ANASTASIA DRANDAKI

220

Brass lamp with griffin's head handle

Italy (?), fifth–sixth century AD
Brass, height 15.9 cm; width 7.2 cm; length 21.3 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, PE 1867.0820.1
PROVENANCE: said to have come from Herculaneum, Italy; ex L. Murat Collection; gift of Miss Sloane Stanley, 1867
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dalton 1901, no.507; Bailey 1996, no.03831 MLA, p.78, pl.90

This brass lamp contains a filler-hole with a baluster lid in the centre, and a wick-hole with scalloped rim at one end. The handle is in the form of a griffin's head holding a spherical object in its beak. On top of the griffin's head is a monogrammed cross surmounted by a dove. The lamp has two suspension lugs and a bayonet-fitting for a stand in its base.

The lamp, whether of clay, metal or glass, was the standard lighting device for houses in the Early Byzantine period. While glass lamps tended to be suspended in multiple lamp-holders known as polycandela, those of metal were either hung singly from integral suspension chains or, as with this example, placed on a lamp-stand. The distribution pattern of find-spots for griffin lamps suggests a place of manufacture somewhere in Italy, possibly Rome. Examples are known from there, Maddaloni, Caltagirone and Porto, and also from Syracuse and Benevento in Sicily (Bailey 1996, p.78). By contrast, only two examples are known from the eastern half of the empire: one, tentatively attributed to 'Constantinople and its vicinity', is in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington DC (Ross 1962, no.30, pp.31–2, pl.XXV), the other, in Berlin, is simply described as having been found in Turkey (Schlunk 1939, no.146, p.52, pl.XLVI).

CHRIS ENTWISTLE

221

Roundel with the Mother of God

1078–81 (?), Constantinople
Serpentine, diameter 17.5 cm

Inscribed: around the edge + Θ(ΕΟΤΟ)Κ(Ε) (ΒΟ)ΗΘΕΙ ΝΙΚΗΦΟΡΩ ΦΙΛΟΧΡΙCΤΩ ΔΕCΠΟΗ ΤΩ ΒΟΤΑΝΕΙΑΤΗ (God-bearer, protect [or help] the Christ-loving master Nikephoros Botaneiates); flanking the Mother of God Μ(ΗΤΗ)Ρ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ (Mother of God)

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, A.1-1927
PROVENANCE: in the Monconys Collection, Lyons, by the seventeenth century; in the Abbey of Heiligenkreuze near Vienna from 1661; acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1927
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1994, p.158; Williamson 1996, pp.90–1; New York 1997, pp.176–7

On this serpentine medallion, the Mother of God is shown in bust form, veiled and haloed and identified by an inscription either side of her head. Her hands are raised before her, palms out. Around the rim is an inscription invoking her help for Emperor Nikephoros III Botaniates. On the reverse is a roughly scratched outline of the bust of the Mother of God and the letter M. The roundel has been broken diagonally across its width, although the Mother of God's face and several letters of the inscription have been lost; it was repaired before it came into the Victoria and Albert Museum's collection.

The iconography, with the frontal position of the Virgin's hands, is also unusual. In representations of the Virgin Orans, the hands and arms are usually out to the sides. However, this representation is comparable with both eleventh-century seals and with the image in the north-west dome of the Panagia Kosmosoteira in Pherrai, Greece.

The roundel can be dated by the inscription to the reign of Emperor Nikephoros Botaniates. However, the wording is unusual in combining *filochristo* (Christ-loving), a common imperial title, with the word *despotes* (lord), which was not adopted as an imperial title until the twelfth century. Potentially, therefore, the roundel may predate Nikephoros's elevation. It is, however, one of very few hardstone carvings that can be dated and is thus important in relation to late eleventh-century Byzantine sculpture. It is conceivable that the roundel might be a slice from a serpentine column. The material itself was highly valued and may have had apotropaic powers. The carving is heavy, but there are similarities with relief panels from the Peribleptos monastery, perhaps founded by Nikephoros and where he was buried. The medallion's function is unknown: it is too large and heavy to have been worn as an amulet. It may have been set above a door or inlaid into church furnishings or perhaps have formed part of the tomb of Nikephoros.

LIZ JAMES

222

Mosaic with head of Christ

Ravenna, 545
Detached apse mosaic, restored in the nineteenth century, 53.5 × 38 cm

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 4312-1856
PROVENANCE: from San Michele in Africisco, Ravenna
SELECTED REFERENCES: Andreescu-Treadgold 1990; Effenberger 1992, no.47, pp.128–31; London 1994, no.73, pp.80–2 (R. Cormack)

Only a few parts of the face are original – the gold background and the blue tunic and mantle are nineteenth-century restorations. On the face the flesh parts, in a mixture of stone and glass tesserae, are mostly original, but the eyes and nose are reworked and the mouth too is partly remade. The hair is mostly original. As with other early mosaics in Ravenna, the surface of the mosaic had deteriorated in the nineteenth century, and was repaired partly by the addition of new tesserae,

and partly by the reuse of salvaged sixth-century tesserae.

It was shown by Andreescu-Treadgold (1990) that this mosaic is the head of Christ from the apse of the church of San Michele in Africisco, Ravenna, which was dedicated on 7 May 545. A watercolour made by E. Pazzi in 1843 (Effenberger 1992, fig.66) shows that the apse contained a standing figure of a young Christ with a cross halo between two Archangels. On the wall above the apse was an enthroned seated Christ between archangels holding the instruments of the Passion and by seven angels of the Apocalypse blowing their trumpets. On each side of the apse were standing figures of SS. Kosmas and Damianos.

This fragment was purchased in Italy in 1856, and thought wrongly to have come from a small church in Milan. The apse mosaics of San Michele were taken down and sold in 1844. They were supposedly sent to Berlin. The consignment is now in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Skulpturensammlung und Museum für Byzantinische Kunst, but it consists of fake substitutes and not the originals. The only surviving originals are this head of Christ, and the heads of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel at Torcello and of an angel at St Petersburg. Clearly the apse mosaic was in very poor condition in the nineteenth century.

Originally this head was probably very similar to the young Christ in Paradise in the apse of San Vitale, Ravenna, dedicated in 548.

ROBIN CORMACK

223

Four Gospels, folio 111r

Constantinople, mid-twelfth century
Parchment, 17.5 × 12.3 cm, 1+275 folios

Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice, 540 (=537)
Contents: Four Gospels (15r–273r) with Eusebius' letter to Carpianus (1r–2r), chapter lists to each Gospel
PROVENANCE: gift of Ioannis Baptistae Recanati, 1734
SELECTED REFERENCES: Friend 1927, p.143, figs 144–7; Carr 1991, pp.667–9, fig.4; Ševčenko 2006c, p.336

This manuscript exemplifies the exuberantly decorated small Gospel-books popular in the twelfth century, surely for private use. First, like the manuscripts of the Kokkinobaphos group, it embeds the traditional pairing of Evangelist portrait and feast icon at the opening of each Gospel in an extravagant surround of ornament, both architectural and vegetal. As in the Codex Ebnerianus (cat.204), also from the mid-twelfth century, feast scene and author portrait are integrated here in a single, richly framed composition that faces a large ornamental headpiece, producing a fanfare of ornament that spans the full opening of the book at the beginning of each Gospel.

Second, it displays Gospel frontispieces. The traditional, static Majestas Domini surrounded by the four Beasts and four Evangelists is replaced by two dynamic, full-page images, one of revelation as the prophets Elijah and Ezekiel proclaim their visions of God, presented here as the youthful Christ Emmanuel, the 'God with us' of his incarnation and eschatological return; the other of transmission as Christ confronts the four Evangelists. The images invite the reader to 'see' the revelation of the Word as it takes flesh in the parchment of the book.

Third, the canon tables are populated by animals, acrobats and allegories, including the labours of the months and personifications of eighteen virtues. The allegories draw upon longstanding traditions in monastic illumination, but twelfth-century imperial iconography adopts the virtues, too (see cat.59). Ševčenko has pointed out the many imperial virtues included in this series, found also in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, MS 1, and suggested their invention for an imperial patron. Such an intersection of monastic and imperial imagery reflects the mid-twelfth-century book trade, in which scribes and painters worked for both lay and monastic dignitaries.

ANNEMARIE WEYL CARR

6
Icons

224

Micromosaic icon with St Theodore

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Wood, tesserae of marble, jasper, lapis lazuli, stone and gilded copper, wax, resin, 9 × 7.4 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv.no.ɑ 29
PROVENANCE: probably gift of Cardinal Bessarion to St Peter's, Rome, before 1498; Museo Sacro, Vatican; De Nolivos Collection, Paris, before 1865; collection of Alexander Basilewsky, Paris, after 1866; bought with the Basilewsky Collection by the Russian Tsar Alexander III for the Imperial Hermitage Museum, 1884, and transferred to the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, January 1885
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. B-123, pp.145–6 with full bibliography (Y.Piatnitsky); New York 2004, no.136, p.229 (Y.Piatnitsky); Piatnitsky 2004, pp.308, 319; Piatnitsky 2006a, pp.111–21

This image of the holy warrior St Theodore Stratelates was produced using tiny tesserae of semi-precious stones, such as lapis lazuli and jasper, with marble for the face and gilded copper for the background and details of the garments and armour. The wooden base was hollowed out and filled with a wax coating, over which the artist executed an under-painting and then inlaid the mosaic. He added separate details using wax-based paints.

The miniature technique and the refined style of this icon place it among Byzantine micromosaics of the highest artistic quality. It is no doubt the product of the Constantinopolitan court workshops, as Byzantine portable mosaics seem to have been distinctive insignia of imperial power and to have belonged exclusively to the emperors and members of their families.

In almost all literature on the subject, the Hermitage icon is dated no later than the first half of the fourteenth century, but it is most likely from the first quarter. A group of micromosaics with inscriptions composed of metallic plates on a lapis lazuli ground and a checked border share these distinctive features with the Hermitage icon; among them are the Annunciation in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the diptych in Florence (cat.227) and the St John the Baptist icons in Venice and the Hermitage, St Petersburg. These pieces were surely produced in Constantinople in the first quarter of the fourteenth century and their style is consistent with monuments of Palaiologan art such as the mosaics in the Church of the Virgin Pammakaristos in Constantinople, which dates from the first decade of the fourteenth century. The group probably all came from the same workshop.

YURI A. PYATNITSKY

225

Micromosaic with Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople, 1150–75
Mosaic on wood, 54 × 41 cm

Soprintendenza speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, inv. no.3
PROVENANCE: from Lorenzo il Magnifico's private collections; later in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence
SELECTED REFERENCES: Furlan 1979, pp.53–5, note 11 (with earlier literature); Krickelberg-Putz 1982, pp.21, 62, 73, 74, 77–8, 84, 92, 103, 108, 110, 111, 126, 130–1; Demus 1991, pp.34–8; Florence 1992, no.117, pp.132–4; Popova 2005, p.57

This is one of the earliest and best examples of micromosaics, made of diminutive bronze, marble and lapis lazuli tesserae of 0.5 to 1 cm. Similar-sized tesserae are found in the micromosaic of the Transfiguration in the Louvre (New York 1997, no.77, pp.130–1 [A.Weyl Carr]), which also displays the same cross motifs in the ornamental border. Though analogous, on compositional grounds, to the roughly contemporary image of Christ in Berlin (Demus 1991, no.5, pp.29–33), it is characterised by a much more evident decorative approach. The meander and zigzag motif in the halo is clearly intended to simulate the sumptuousness associated with icons made of precious metals and enamels; moreover, the multicoloured polylobe squares enframing the letters IC XC had often been used for golden appliqués to icon revetments since the tenth century (see Wessel 1967, nos 10 and 18, pp.55–6 and 70–3).

Unlike the Louvre icon, in which the dynamic and expressive elements of Byzantine art around the year 1200 can be detected, the Bargello mosaic is characterised by a strongly linear rendering of both folds and physiognomic details, chromatic subtlety and a harmonic construction of the body, which fits with the style of Komnenian art in the second half of the twelfth century.

MICHELE BACCI

226

Micromosaic with the Transfiguration

Constantinople, around 1200

Tesserae of gilded copper, marble, lapis lazuli and glass, wax; originally on wood, transferred to slate in 1864 and restored (lower part of Christ's body, right hand side of his face) in putty and stucco, 52 × 35 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, M. 145
PROVENANCE: formerly in the collection of Ignazio Papé, Duke Gianpilieri, in Palermo in the eighteenth century; acquired in Palermo by Léon Dufourny in 1791; collection of François Belloni, mosaicist; acquired by the museum, 1852
SELECTED REFERENCES: Laborde 1853, no.1098, Labarte 1864, pl.CXX; Paris 1931, no.642; Coche de La Ferté 1938, no.74; Athens 1964, no.163; New York 1970, no.239; Weitzmann 1978, pl.28; Coche de La Ferté 1981, p.172 and doc. 478; Brussels 1982, no.16; Krickelberg-Putz 1982, pp.101–3, 108, 110 (with bibliography); Bressier 1991, p.538; Demus 1991, pp.45–50, no.9; Paris 1992, no.279; Paris 1995, no.2; New York 1997, no.77

There are more than 50 Byzantine micromosaics in existence. Usually small in size, they are distinctive for the technique of their manufacture; they are constructed from minute tesserae (in this case between 0.5 and 1 mm in breadth) made of copper (sometimes silver or gold), glass, marble or stones of various colours, fixed in wax on a wooden support – as was this example from the Louvre in the eighteenth century – transferred onto slate in 1864.

This icon is of great technical virtuosity; it is also one of few to represent a scene from the Gospels, in this case the Transfiguration of Christ with Moses and Elijah at his side and the Apostles Peter, James and John below. One of the greatest in size, it has sometimes been assumed to be from an icon screen, although this is far from certain.

The Louvre Transfiguration is one of the earliest micromosaics. Although we know that it was in Sicily in the eighteenth century, its style is reminiscent of the mosaics of Daphni of around 1100 and it, too, should be attributed to a workshop of Constantinople. The mis-spelling of ΜΕΤΑΜΡΟΦΟCIC (Transfiguration) with the inversion of the letters 'O' and 'R' does not necessarily indicate a provincial manufacture. However, the expressive, almost anxious faces of Elijah and Moses, each framed in a shock of shaggy hair, and the vivid play of light and shadow on the drapery has been compared by Otto Demus with the late twelfth-century frescoes in Hosios David in Thessaloniki, justifying a date in the second half of the twelfth century, or around 1200.

JANNIC DURAND

227

Micromosaic diptych with festival scenes

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Mosaic on wood panel with silver-gilt and enamel frame, each panel 27 × 17.7 cm

Museo dell'Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, Florence, 09/00230042-43
PROVENANCE: Baptistery of San Giovanni in Fonte, Florence
SELECTED REFERENCES: Becherucci and Brunetti 1970, no.37, pp.279–81; Grabar 1975, p.60; Furlan 1979, pp.81–2; New York 2004, no.129, pp.219–20 (A. Effenberger)

According to an eighteenth-century tradition, the diptych arrived in Florence in 1394 as a bequest to the Baptistery of San Giovanni from Nicoletta di Antonio Grioni, the Venetian widow of an official at the Byzantine court of John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–54); in the fifteenth century it was set within a silver frame decorated with enamels. The work displays the twelve Gospel scenes corresponding to the most important feasts of the Byzantine liturgical year (the so-called Dodekaorton). It betrays technical, compositional and stylistic features hinting at an execution in the cultural atmosphere of early fourteenth-century Constantinople. The use of miniaturised tesserae enables the artist to realise an extremely accurate rendering of even small details. Each of the twelve scenes, included within a square of roughly 9 × 9 cm, is set either against an architectural background embellished with classicising elements, or a natural landscape indented with the irregular rock peaks so common in mature Palaiologan painting; the human figures are characterised by diversified poses and animated gestures, and a special emphasis is given to representations in profile. Some details, such as the figure of Adam in the Anastasis, seem to be reminiscent of the vigorous expressiveness betrayed by the Passion cycle of 1312 in the narthex of the *katholikon* in the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, even if its general tone is that of a more serene and balanced rendering of bodies and spaces.

MICHELE BACCI

228

Micromosaic with the Man of Sorrows

Constantinople, around 1300
Mosaic tesserae on wood, 13 × 19 cm (without frame); 23 × 28 cm (with frame); 98.7 × 97.1 cm (case open)

Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, inv. no.89. Fondo Edifici di Culto, amministrato dal Ministero dell' Interno, Direzione Centrale per l'Amministrazione del Fondo Edifici di Culto
PROVENANCE: in the Basilica since 1385–86
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bertelli 1969; New York 2004, no.131, pp.221–22 (H.C. Evans)

At the centre of this Italian Renaissance case (dating from the late fourteenth century with later additions) which contains the relics of many saints (wrapped in silk and labelled with their names) is a Byzantine micromosaic in an added silver frame. The subject is the Man of Sorrows (or 'Utmost Humiliation'), the Good Friday image developed in Byzantium in the twelfth century for Easter rituals (see cat.246). Christ is dead and shows the cut in his chest and his wounded hands (the stigmata). On the cross piece above Christ's head is written in Greek 'King of Glory' (Ο ΒΑCΙΛΕΥC ΤΗC ΔΟΞΗC), and on each side of the cross nimbus the abbreviation Jesus Christ (IC XC) appears. The image might have been used in the Good Friday liturgy or as a devotional icon (in some Byzantine paintings of death scenes of monks, a panel with this iconography is seen placed on the corpse).

On the back of the micromosaic is a painting of St Catherine (Η ΑΓΙΑ ΑΙΚΑΤΕΡΙΝΗ), part Western, part Byzantine in style. This has led to the suggestion that the micromosaic was removed from the Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai around 1380. Coats of arms of the family of Raimondelli Orsini del Balzo, from 1386 Count of Lecce, are on the enamels in the added silver frame. He went on pilgrimage to Sinai from 1380 to 1381, and claimed to have given a finger of St Catherine and another micromosaic to the church of St Catherine at Galatina. He probably gave this icon to the church of Santa Croce in 1385 or 1386 (it was then Carthusian, and is now Cistercian), near the Basilica of St John Lateran. It was there encased in the present frame with the inscription: FUIT S GREGORI MAGNI PAPAE, implying that the micromosaic was identified as a work of the vision of Christ by Pope Gregory the Great (590–604), who had found a disbeliever in his congregation and prayed for a sign from God and was rewarded by the appearance of the crucified Christ above the altar. This icon in its relics display case became a famous image of veneration by pilgrims to Rome – to see it they had to descend through a dark passage into a subterranean chapel known as the 'chapel Jerusalem', whose pavement was laid on earth brought from Golgotha. Only the Pope could say Mass in this chapel.

ROBIN CORMACK

229.1, 229.2

Pair of icons with the Annunciation

Constantinople, eleventh–late thirteenth century
Egg tempera, gold and enamel on wood, with silver gilt revetment, both panels 111 × 67.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. nos 79 and 12
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, pp.262–70, t. XI–XII; Balabanov 1995, pp.180–2, nos 2–3; Georgievski 1993, pp.2–3, no.4; Paris 1999, nos 12 and 13; Rome 1999, nos 12 and 13; Padua 2001, nos 27 and 28

This monumental Annunciation is painted on two separate panels, with the Archangel Gabriel to the left and the seated Virgin to the right. Gabriel moves gently towards the Virgin, and raises his right hand in a gesture of greeting. Mary's head is tilted towards the Archangel, but she looks out towards the viewer and is occupied in spinning with a distaff. This alludes to the legend of the Virgin's upbringing in the Temple at Jesusalem where she would spin and weave the priests' vestments.

The icons are distinctive for their rich palette and well-modelled figure style, but there is some repainting. They also have expensive silver revetments (with some losses); stamped on that of the Virgin is the Greek inscription Ο ΚΥΡΙΟC ΜΕΤΑ COΥ (the Lord is with you), and on enamels in quadrilobe plaques the Greek sigla, Mother of God. Also in enamel, below these sigla, is a donor's inscription: ΤΑ CΑ ΠΡΟCΑΓΩ COΙ ΚΟΡΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ. ΛΕΩΝ COC ΟΙΚΤΡΟC ΟΙΚΕΤΗC Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΘΥΤΗC ('I give you what belongs to you, All Holy Virgin Mary. Leo, your pitiable servant,

priest of God'). The silver plates have floral ornamentation and relief figures. On the Gabriel panel are figures of archangels (the inscription naming Gabriel is lost); on the Virgin panel, the revetment is of the same decorative type: along the top are medallions with Christ, the Virgin and St John the Baptist (the Deisis) and with the Virgin's parents, Joachim and Anna. The medallions at the bottom are SS. Andrew and Blasios. At the sides are ten plaques with standing figures of prophets. Samuel, David, Daniel and Zechariah can be recognised among them. The metal halo of the Virgin is of a different style and probably later than the revetment, as are the two semi-precious stones on her maphorion.

These panels have been the subject of much research and controversy. When they were first studied in 1900 they were fixed in the iconostasis of the late thirteenth-century church of the Virgin Peribleptos in Ohrid. They were dated to the eleventh or twelfth century, and the priest Leo was identified as an archbishop of Ohrid, either Leo I, Archbishop of Ohrid (1037–56), or Leo II Mung (1108–20). It is certainly more likely that they were intended to be fixed, not to an iconostasis, but on the arches on each side of the sanctuary of some as yet unidentified church. This was a common position for the placing of the Annunciation in Byzantine churches, usually painted in fresco. This dating implies that the silver revetments were added later, and there are some indications that the painting is earlier than the plates. However, Grabar, who dated the revetments to the late thirteenth century, argued that the panels were all of this date. This would mean that the priest Leo is unknown, and perhaps later still.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

230

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Psychosostria (front) and the Annunciation (back)

Constantinople, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver-gilt revetment with enamel, 93 × 68 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 10
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, pp. 253–5, New York 2004, no. 99

This large two-sided icon was made for the veneration of the Virgin Psychosostria (She who saves souls) and also to function as a processional icon, presumably on the festival of the Annunciation on 25 March (7 April, according to the Orthodox calendar). On the silver-gilt revetment are the inscriptions on the front in the roundels, M(HTH)P Θ(EO)Y (Mother of God) and I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C (Jesus Christ); in the rectangular plaques, H ΨYXOCΩ(CT)PIA (Saviour of Souls); and on the back in red letters on the gold ground reverse, O XAIPETICMOC (The Annunciation), O APX(AΓΓEAOC) ΓABPIHA (The Archangel Gabriel) and M(HTH)P Θ(EO)Y (Mother of God). The dry style, the bulky forms of the garments of the Archangel Gabriel, the inverted perspective of the architecture and the minature and playful caryatids on the columns behind the Virgin are all features associated with the art of Constantinople in the early fourteenth century.

The front of the icon celebrates the Virgin Psychosostria but she is represented in the form of the Hodegetria. This icon is therefore a copy of the famous model in Constantinople believed to be painted by St Luke and which was venerated as an icon that could perform miracles. Copies of this icon were also believed capable of carrying out miraculous healings of the faithful. The Virgin and Child, protected by two angels, are framed within an ornamental silver-gilt revetment. This includes cast plaques of Christ in the centre at the top and also busts of the prophets Aaron, Gideon, Ezekiel, Daniel and Habakkuk, Jacob and St John Chrysostom.

The stylistic clues to a production in Constantinople, together with its current provenance in Ohrid, fit neatly with some archival documents about the history of the monastery of the Virgin Psychosostria in Constantinople. The Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) made a gift of this monastery to Gregory I, Archbishop of Ohrid, who erected the exonarthex of the cathedral of St Sophia in that city in 1313. Very probably the icon was sent on this occasion from Constantinople to Ohrid.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

231

Icon with Christ

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 157.5 × 125 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 83
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, p. 249; New York 2004, no. 154

Christ is depicted half-length. He holds an open Gospel in his left hand while giving a benediction with his right. His expression is one of contemplation and seriousness; his eyes are slightly turned to the right. His cruciform nimbus and the ground of the icon under the revetment is in gold. The text on the Gospel-book in Greek reads: 'My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.' This passage (John xxvi, 8) was spoken by Christ at the winter festival of Hanukkah when he was nearly stoned by the Jews in the Temple at the porch of Solomon. In this chapter he sets out his role as the Good Shepherd and protector of the faithful.

Christ is enclosed by a silver-gilt revetment. It is surprising to find that it has been constructed out of a series of irregular decorated plates which look as though they were mass-produced and then adapted to fit. Besides the floral ornamentation on the plates, there are figural reliefs of saints (George, Demetrios, St Clement of Ohrid, and standing angels) as well as some festival scenes and the Etimasia (the empty throne ready for the Last Judgement). Some of these images are repeated, again indicating the use of mass-produced plates.

The inscription on the bottom frame seems to have come from a different icon. It reads in Greek: YMNON EΠINIKON ΩC Θ(E)Ω ΦEPEI AYTOC Δ' ENYΛOC K(AI) XOIKOC TYΓXANΩN ΔOYKAC ICAAK(I)OC CEBACTOKPATΩP IAACTH EIKONA XPYCOY APΓYPOY TE TEXNOYPΓHMEN(HN) HN K(AI) ΔEXOIO ΠAMMEΔON Θ(EO)Y (KPATOC[.....]EIC) EΞIAACMA TΩN AMAPT(H)MA(TON). This states that the gold and silver icon is offered to God for the redemption of the sins of sebastokrator Isaakios Doukas. It has been suggested that this man was the commander of the cavalry of the Serbian Tsar Dušan and governor of Ohrid in the fourteenth century.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

232

Icon with the Virgin Psychosostria

Thessaloniki or Ohrid, middle of fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, with silver gilt revetment, 158 × 122 × 4 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 82
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1909, p. 248; New York 2004, no. 153

This icon is a pendant to the icon with Christ and, judging by their almost identical size, style and treatment, they were most likely both made in the same workshop, probably by the same artist. Their scale and lavish decoration suggests they were made to be prominent in a church, probably as intercolumnar icons in an iconostasis, and it has been suggested that this was in the Church of St Sophia at Ohrid, the cathedral of the city since the eleventh century. The Virgin is inscribed in two roundels, as M(HTH)P Θ(EO)Y (Mother of God); and in the rectangular plaques as H ΨYXOCΩ(CT)PIA, 'She who saves souls'. The term Psychosostria is found as an appellation of Mary on a number of icons, and there was a monastery of the Virgin Psychosostria at Constantinople. Mary in this icon is turning to the right, presumably towards the icon of Christ. She holds the Child, wriggling in her arms, and looks out towards the viewer.

The Virgin and Christ have gold haloes, and are framed within a silver-gilt revetment with a geometric pattern of interlacing circles. On the frame of the icon are floral ornaments and figural reliefs. The busts of St John the Baptist and the Virgin, and the archangels Michael and Gabriel are on the top frame. Christ is missing at the centre and has been replaced with a figure of the Virgin Episkepsis. Along the sides are busts of the prophets Moses, Aaron, Zechariah, Isaiah, and Habakkuk. Also represented is Nicholas, Archbishop of Ohrid.

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

233

Icon with the Baptism of Christ

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44.5 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 6
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ljubinković and Corović-Ljubinković 1951, pp. 122–3, fig. 2, Paris 1999, no. 21

The title of this work, H BAΠ(TH)CIC (Baptism), is written in Greek in red letters at the top. St John the Baptist stands on the rocky bank of the River Jordan to the left and is inscribed O A[ΓIOC] IO(ANNHC) O (ΠPOΔPOM)OC (St John the Forerunner). Christ has a cruciform nimbus and is inscribed I(HCOY)C X(PICTO)C (Jesus Christ).

The standard Byzantine elements of the scene are found, though the four spectators on the right bank are all angels: the Holy Spirit is coming down from heaven in the form of a dove. Beside the Baptist is a small bush and his axe (referring to John's statement that every tree that does not bare fruit will be cut down). Christ is dressed in a loincloth as he is baptised. In the waters of the Jordan, on the left there is a personification of the river as an old man with an urn, and on the right a dragon.

The scene is painted with great gusto ; the Baptist towers above Christ and the rocky landscape climbs towards heaven. On the back of the icon is a painted cross. It was very likely produced as one of a set of festival icons to adorn the same sanctuary screen as the Doubting of Thomas and the Anastasis (cats 234, 235).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

234

Icon with the Anastasis

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36.5 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 5
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ljubinković and Corović-Ljubinković 1951, pp. 122–3; Paris 1999, no. 22

In the upper part of the icon there are remnants of the red letters of an inscription: H [ANACTA]CIC (the Resurrection). The Anastasis is one of the two regular representations of the Resurrection in the Orthodox church. Christ is seen in glory, breaking down the gates of Hell, and then ascending to Heaven and taking with him the most famous Old Testament figures. In this icon Christ sweeps down diagonally to Hades in a blaze of light with angels above holding the instruments of the Crucifixion. He rescues Adam from his sarcophagus, while Eve waits behind. Next behind her is Abel with a shepherd's crook (his murder at the hands of his brother Cain made him the first martyr). On the right are kings David and Solomon and behind them St John the Baptist to the right. The scene is set against a mass of craggy rocks, reminiscent of those in the Baptism icon (cat. 233). The broken gates of Hell are beneath the feet of Christ whose divinity is marked by the shining golden rays of the mandorla.

This icon was very likely made to adorn the same sanctuary screen as the Baptism and the Doubting of Thomas (cats 233 and 235).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

235

Icon with the Doubting of Thomas

Ohrid, early fourteenth century
Egg tempera and gold on wood, 44 × 36 cm

Icon Gallery, Ohrid, inv. no. 7
PROVENANCE: Church of the Mother of God Peribleptos, Ohrid
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ljubinković and Corović-Ljubinković 1951, pp. 122–25; Paris 1999, no. 23

This icon is entitled the Doubting of Thomas although only a few remaining letters of the red inscription are visible in its upper part. The account in the Gospel of St John (xx, 24–9) relates that Thomas was absent when Christ appeared to the other Apostles after the Resurrection and showed them his wounds from the Crucifixion. Thomas refused to believe in the Resurrection unless he had seen the wounds for himself. The icon shows the subsequent appearance of Christ to Thomas. Christ stands in the centre of two groups of five Apostles. He raises his right arm and displays his body. Thomas on the left stretches out his right hand to touch the wound in Christ's right side. The other Apostles show their emotions as Thomas accepts the truth of Christ's return to Jerusalem after death. According to the Gospel the appearance of Christ took place in a house with the doors closed. The reality of the architecture with its arches, columns and capitals is well represented in the icon, with an almost ghostly apparition of Christ to the eleven disciples (lacking Judas Iscariot).

It is probable that this work was made as a festival icon for the same sanctuary screen as the Baptism and the Anastasis (cats 233, 234).

MILCO GEORGIEVSKI

236

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Annunciation

Thessaloniki (?), third quarter of the fourteenth century
Tempera on wood (canvas), gilding, silver-gilt revetment, 99.5 × 73 × 5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2316
PROVENANCE: Church of the Virgin Peribleptos, Ohrid; court chapel, Dedinje, Belgrade, *c.* 1930
SELECTED REFERENCES: Milošević 1958; New York 2004, no. 152, pp. 254–5 (A. Nitić)

The Virgin Hodegetria is depicted on the front of the icon, covered by a revetment, and the Annunciation appears on the back. There is an integral raised frame on the front (the lower edge is missing), while the back is flat with a gilded background. The paint layer is abraded and partly missing.

The style of painting, which can be attributed to the third quarter of the fourteenth century, represents a high point in the art of the Palaiologan era. Technique and style indicate that both sides of the icon were the work of the same artist. Some parts of the icon were overpainted in the seventeenth century.

On the revetment, with its decoration of interlaced circles, three medallions have survived. The frame bore busts and figures of Christ, the archangels and the Apostles, of which two busts have survived. The revetment enhanced the icon's function as an object for prayer. Its style and technical details reveal that it dates from the same period as the icon.

SOFIJA KAJTEZ AND ALEKSANDRA NITIĆ

237

ARTIST FROM MORAVIA

Icon with St Demetrios

End of the fourteenth century, or beginning of the fifteenth century, Hilandar (?)
Tempera on board, 34.3 × 26.5 cm

Museum of Applied Art, Belgrade, inv. no. 1351
SELECTED REFERENCES: Radojčić 1960, pp. 16, 18, fig. 10; Djurić 1961, pp. 40–1, no. 40; Radojčić 1961, fig. XII, p. 69, Janc 1962, p. 101; Weitzmann et al. 1970, p. LXV, fig. 203; Vodić 1970, no. 23, fig. 12; Paris 1983, p. 199, no. 215, p. 47; Stošić 1988, p. 111; Helsinki 2006, no. I.7

St Demetrios was a popular military saint whose cult was centred from the Early Byzantine period at Thessaloniki, where he became the patron saint of the city and protected it during attacks and sieges. His festival day at Thessaloniki was 26 October, and there was an annual fair there which attracted visitors from around the Mediterranean. By the Late Byzantine period the cult of St Demetrios had spread broadly, and especially into the Balkans and Russia. He was believed to have been martyred in the early fourth century, and a large, still surviving, Church of St Demetrios at Thessaloniki was by the sixth century filled with mosaics representing his miracles of protection and healing, which were also recorded in texts and in sermons delivered in the famous church.

This icon shows St Demetrios armed to the teeth. The standing figure is painted on a concave board; the ground is ochre, imitating gold and his name is written in Greek in red letters. He wears a red tunic, breastplate and armour, and chain-mail trousers. He has a dark-blue cape over his

shoulders. He holds a brown lance in his right hand, and a sword with a gilded hilt in the other hand. He is also equipped with a club, a quiver, a bow, a shield and a helmet. The painter has represented all these instruments of war in the same detail. The saint's face is young and handsome and his brown hair is luxuriant and wavy.

This is a small, delicately painted icon suitable for private devotions and for kissing. It is very likely that it was used in the home rather than in a church, and it belongs to a period of deep crisis in the history of Serbia when enemies were all around. It offered protection in war through prayer to the famous holy warrior. However, the icon belonged to the collection of painter and collector Ljuba Ivanović, who claimed that it came from the Hillandar monastery on Mount Athos, and so it may have had a monastic use at some time in its history.

DUŠAN MILOVANOVIĆ

238

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS (fl.*c.*1425–50)

Icon with St Theodore

First half of the fifteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 122.8 × 70 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM Loverdos Collection ΣΛ 285-Λ333
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1983, no. 8; Athens 1986, no. 33 (C. Baltoyanni); London 1987a, no. 32 (C. Baltoyanni); Athens 1994, no. 1 (C. Baltoyanni); Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, no. 30

St Theodore Tiro is depicted against a gold ground in front of two mountains, standing and slaying a dragon. He wears a gold-embellished military dress and has a sword, a bow and a quiver of arrows. He is poised to strike a winged dragon lying in the foreground. At the top left appears the Hand of God, blessing the saint.

At the bottom right, in black capital letters, is the signature of the painter: ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ (Hand of Angelos), which was revealed after cleaning. Laboratory examination of a second signature, on the left, Ποίημα Στεφάνου ιεροδιακόνου του Τζαγκαρόλου ΑΧ ( ) (Work of hierodeacon Stephanos Tzagarolos 16 [ ]), was proved to be a forgery.

The representation of St Theodore as a dragon-slayer, usually on horseback, is encountered in Byzantine painting from the tenth century (Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, p. 112). The saint is depicted standing and in military dress, but not slaying the dragon, in a late twelfth-century icon in the Monastery of St John the Theologian on Patmos (Chatzidakis 1977, no. 3). The iconography of the standing dragon-slaying soldier-saint was elaborated in fifteenth-century Cretan painting. Characteristic examples are two icons by the painter Angelos Akotantos, representing St Phanourios, one in Patmos (Chatzidakis 1977, no. 69, pl. 27) and the other in the Cycladic island of Pholegandros (Vassilaki 1981, p. 231, pl. 57b), which show pronounced influences from Western art. The earliest dated example of a standing dragon-slaying saint is in a wall painting of St Phanourios of 1426–31 in the Valsamonero monastery in Crete, with which Angelos was closely associated, according to his will (Manousacas 1960–61, pp. 146, 149, note 5). However, the closest example to the present image, a major work of the prolific painter Angelos, is the icon of St George in Patmos, which is also attributed to him (Chatzidakis 1977, no. 24, pl. 26).

KALLIOPI-PHAIDRA KALAFATI

239

ANGELOS AKOTANTOS (fl.*c.*1425–50)

Icon with the Virgin Kardiotissa and Child

First half of fifteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, 121 × 96.5 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 1552 (T 1382)
SELECTED REFERENCES: London 1987a, no. 33 (N. Chatzidakis); Baltimore 1988, no. 44 (N. Chatzidakis); Baltoyanni 1994, p. 105 ff., no. 26; Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, no. 27.

The Virgin is named in Greek Η ΚΑΡΔΙΟΤΗCΑ, Kardiotissa. She wears a purple maphorion, a dark robe, and a head covering, and holds the Christ Child affectionately in her right arm. He is turned towards his Mother, with his head turned back and both hands stretching out towards her. Above are two angels. Towards the bottom of the icon, in white lettering, is the signature of the painter: ΧΕΙΡ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΥ (Hand of Angelos). This is the artist Angelos Akotantos, a documented painter in the Cretan city of Candia in the second quarter of the fifteenth century (Vassilaki 1981, pp. 290 ff.). Three other signed icons by him are preserved in the Byzantine and Christian Museum: St Theodore (cat. 238), St John the Baptist and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple, all of them reflecting the high standard of art in Crete in this period (Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, nos 28, 29).

The pose of the Christ Child, with minor variations, is encountered in two icons, one from the late thirteenth century, in the Monastery of St Catherine in Sinai, and the other, from the second half of the fourteenth century, in the collection of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul (New York 2004, no. 210, 90). Several monasteries dedicated to the Virgin Kardiotissa are known on Crete in the fifteenth century. This iconographic type of the Virgin is found in icons up to the eighteenth century (Baltoyanni 1994, pp. 105–11).

This is an icon of exceptional quality, and, unlike some of the paintings by Angelos, exhibits no Western influence from his contact with Italian art on the island, but instead follows the traditions of the art of Constantinople, which Angelos was planning to visit when he drew up his will in 1436 (Manousacas 1960–61, pp. 140 ff.).

KALLIOPI-PHAIDRA KALAFATI

240

Icon of St John the Theologian

Constantinople or Thessaloniki, *c.*1370–80
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm

Ecclesiastical and Byzantine Museum, Mytilene
PROVENANCE: monastery of the Taxiarchs, Kato Tritos, Mytilene
SELECTED REFERENCES: Xyngopoulos 1960–61, pp. 87–9, pl. 41; Athens 1964, no. 231, p. 269 (P. L. Vocotopoulos); Bakirtzes 1989, no. 4, pp. 20–1; Vocotopoulos 1995, no. 117, p. 218; Acheimastou-Potamianou 2007

This is the back of a bilateral icon which was detached during conservation in 1960. The front side, which is now a separate icon, shows Christ Pantokrator (cat. 241). The icon was cut all around its edges in order to fit into the intercolumnar space of a templon, which was smaller than the original, for which it was made.

St John the Theologian is shown half-length slightly turned towards the left. He is holding before his breast with both hands an open Gospel-book, on which the starting phrase of his Gospel (John I, 1–2) is written: ΕΝ ΑΡ/ΧΗ ΗΝ / Ο ΛΟΓΟC. / ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟ/ΓΟC [Η]Ν / ΠΡΟC ΤΟΝ Θ(ΕΟ)Ν // ΚΑΙ Θ(ΕΟ)C ΗΝ / Ο ΛΟΓΟC. / ΟΥΤΟC ΗΝ / ΕΝ ΑΡΧΗ / ΠΡΟC ΤΟΝ Θ(ΕΟ)Ν. ΠΑΝΤΑ ΔΙ ΑΥΤΟΥ (εγένετο) (In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him). This phrase from the Gospel makes a direct allusion to the image of Christ shown on the front side of the icon.

St John the Theologian can be compared with two icons of the same saint from a Great Deisis composition in the Vatopedi (Thessaloniki 1997c, no. 2.24, pp. 90–1 (E. Tsigaridas) and Chilandari (Vocotopoulos 1995, no. 120, p. 218) monasteries on Mount Athos, both dating from the third quarter of the fourteenth century. He is even closer to the fresco representation of St John the Theologian from the wall decoration of the Pantokrator monastery on Athos, of around 1363 (Tsigaridas 1978, pl. 7; Papamastorakis 1998, fig. 11).

The faces of Christ and St John the Theologian on the Mytilene icons follows the same stylistic patterns. There is a difference, however: the painter conveys the divine nature of Christ in contrast with the earthly character of St John the Theologian. This may be one of the reasons why the side with St John the Theologian was believed to date later (around 1400) than the front side with Christ Pantokrator. This dating is not acceptable and both sides should be treated as the work of one painter only and of the same date.

MARIA VASSILAKI

241

Icon of Christ Pantokrator

Constantinople or Thessaloniki, *c.*1370–80
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 107 × 69.5 cm

Ecclesiastical and Byzantine Museum, Mytilene
PROVENANCE: monastery of the Taxiarchs, Kato Tritos, Mytilene
SELECTED REFERENCES: Athens 1964, no. 200, pp. 254–5 (P. L. Vocotopoulos); Gounaris 1972, pl. 7; Bakirtzes 1989, no. 2, pp. 16–17; Baltoyanni 2003, no. 2, pp. 37–8, pl. 5; Acheimastou-Potamianou 2007

This is the front side of a bilateral icon which was detached during conservation in 1960. The back side, which is now a separate icon, shows St John the Theologian (cat. 240). The icon was cut all around its edges in order to fit into the intercolumnar space of a templon, which was smaller than the original, for which it was made.

Christ is shown in frontal pose and half-length holding a closed Gospel-book in his left hand and blessing with his right. He is wearing a deep-brown chiton with a wide golden stripe (clavus) on the right shoulder and a deep-blue himation. The face of Christ, his neck and hands are modelled in dark flesh with an abundant use of white thin lines, which take the shape of a net.

The dating of the icon to *c.*1370–80 is based on its close similarities, iconographic and stylistic, to a well-known icon from the Pantokrator monastery on Mount Athos now in the State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg (inv. no. I-515, St Petersburg and London 2000, no. B125, pp. 148–50 [Y. Piatnitsky]; Papamastorakis 1998, pp. 43–4). This icon is securely dated in 1363, as it is a dedication to the Pantokrator monastery by its two founders, namely the brothers Alexios, Great Stratopedarches and Ioannes, Great Primicerios, both of whom were painted on the frame. The representation of Christ on another bilateral icon still deposited in the Pantokrator monastery with Christ Pantokrator on one side and St Athanasios the Athonite on the other and dated *c.*1363, also shows stylistic similarities with the Mytilene icon (Papamastorakis 1998, pp. 48, 50, figs 20–21; Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998–99, pp. 309–16, fig. 1). The face of the Virgin on a bilateral icon in Rhodes with the Virgin Hodegetria on one side and St Nicholas on the other (Athens 2000, no. 66, pp. 418–21 [A. Katsioti]) has employed exactly the same stylistic devices in the use of white thin lines for lighting the face. This attests to the widespread occurrence of a style that could have equally originated from Constantinople or Thessaloniki.

MARIA VASSILAKI

242

The Prophet Elijah

1180–1200
Wood, 124 × 62.5 × 4.5 cm

Byzantine Museum, Kastoria, inv. no. 164/72
Church of the Virgin Eleousa, Kastoria
SELECTED REFERENCES: Tsigaridas 1988, p. 315, fig. 29; Tsigaridas 2002, fig. 1

The Prophet Elijah is represented half-length and slightly turning. His features are those of an ascetic, and his long hair falls down to his shoulders. His right hand is held in a gesture of blessing, and he holds an open inscribed scroll in the left. He wears a chiton and a sheepskin tied at the front on the chest with a tight knot. On either side of the prophet's shoulders is the inscription: Ο ΠΡΟΦΗΤΗC ΗΛΙΑC (Prophet Elijah). However, the dark blue ground on which this is written is a later restoration.

The icon, which is well preserved, has been cut down, no doubt to fit a space narrower than its original setting. It has suffered only slight damage – the wood has been chipped in places on the frame, the pigments have flaked in a few places and the right shoulder and upper arm have been overpainted at a later date.

On the back is a large cross, on either side of the horizontal arm of which are incised the following inscriptions (Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis 1984): Ι(ησους) Χ(ριστός) Ν(ι)Κ(ά) Φ(ως) Χ(ριστού) Φ(αίνει) Π(άσι) CΤ(αυρόν) CΤ(...) Δ(...) Π(...) Χ(ριστός) Χ(άριν) Χ(αρίζει) (Jesus Christ Conquers. Light of Christ Shines Everywhere Cross ST(...) D(...) P(...) Christ Bestows Grace).

The portrait features, the expression and modelling of the face, and the linear rendering of the hair and beard connect this icon with works dating to the late twelfth century, such as the wall paintings in the Church of St Stephen at Kastoria (Siomkos 2005, fig. 70) and of the Virgin of Arakos in Cyprus (Winfield 2003, fig. 15, Tsigaridas 1986, p. 110; Livieratou 1999, pp. 76, 77, 114, no. 10).

EUTHIMIOS N. TSIGARIDAS

243

Icon with the Koimesis of the Virgin

Constantinople, early fifteenth century
Gesso on wood, gold leaf, egg tempera, 54 × 39 cm

The Paul and Alexandra Canellopoulos Museum, Athens, inv. no. Ε122
SELECTED REFERENCE: Chatzidakis and Scampavias 2007, pp. 114–18 (N. Chatzidakis)

The icon has a wide, slightly raised integral frame. The central subject is the Koimeis of the Virgin, and has many parallels with the early fourteenth century mosaic in the Church of the Chora at Constantinople (Underwood 1966, pl. 320). The richly draped bed upon which the body of the Virgin lies forms the horizontal axis of the composition; the vertical axis is provided by the slender figure of Christ standing behind the bier and holding her soul in the form of a swaddled infant. The bier, the apex of the mandorla surrounding Christ and the inclined figures of Peter and Paul at the ends of the bed form an imaginary triangle around which all other figures (the Apostles and three hierarchs) are fitted. The composition is framed by two-storied buildings, united by a semicircular wall. Practically the same iconography is to be found on the frame of the icon of Nikolaos Ritzos in Sarajevo, painted around 1500 (Vocotopoulos 2005, p. 221, fig. 11).

On the four corners of the frame are depicted the Embrace of Joachim and Anne (top left), the Nativity of the Virgin (top right), the Blessing of the Priests (bottom left) and the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple (bottom right). The scenes, painted within elaborate architectural settings, are traditional in design (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1965, pp. 172–81).

On the vertical sides are St Kosmas of Maïouma (left) and St John of Damascus (right) and on the horizontal sides, the busts of SS Joseph (above) and Theophanes (below). They all have scrolls with extracts from their hymns for the festival of the Koimesis on 15 August and wear monastic garments (John and Joseph wear turbans). Several monumental Byzantine decorations link these saints with the Koimesis and their texts connect with theological discussion in this period which explore biblical prefigurations of the Virgin (Baltoyanni 1991, pp. 362ff.).

The icon, with its theological interests, its careful design, the naturalistic proportions of the figures, the solid draperies, the brilliance of the colours and the elegantly drawn outlines, can be assigned with some certainty to the first quarter of the fifteenth century.

CONSTANTINE SCAMPAVIAS

7
Byzantium and the West

244

Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, second half of the tenth century
Tempera and gold on board, 26 × 12.5 × 2.5 cm

Vatican Museums, Vatican City, inv. no. 61898
PROVENANCE: from the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran, Rome
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lauer 1906, pp. 95–7; Grisar 1907, pp. 152–4; Hyslop 1934, pp. 333–40; New York 1997, no. 35, pp. 76–7 (A. Weyl Carr); Ravenna 2001, no. 125 (U. Utro), pp. 184 (fig.), 229

This reliquary, one of the most important finds in the Treasury of the Sancta Sanctorum in the Lateran, consists of a rectangular casket with a sliding lid furnished with a cruciform compartment inside with a double arm (*crux gemina*); this 'patriarchal' shape was common in Jerusalem and other parts of Eastern Christendom. It would have contained a prized piece of the Cross used at the Crucifixion and found in Jerusalem by Helena in the fourth century. Several churches in Byzantium claimed to possess relics of the 'True Cross'. Because of the scarcity of such relics, the materials most usually employed for these caskets were metals and precious stones; however, wooden caskets were not uncommon in the Christian Orient, particularly when, as in the present case, the pictorial decoration was accompanied by a political or religious message of some sort.

Both the interior and exterior surfaces of the cover and the compartment of this reliquary are covered in paintings with a gold background; the whole scheme comprises a theological programme based on the Byzantine rite for Holy Week. On the outside of the lid a Crucifixion depicts Jesus on the Cross and conforms to the dictates of canonical tradition: blood flows copiously from Christ's side, the Cross is erected on the skull of Adam at Golgotha and the Sun and the Moon are halted in their course by the event. The only innovations in the composition are the Virgin's mournful embrace of her Son's feet and the demonstrative gesture made by St John, who points to his Gospel. Emotional responses to the Crucifixion are expressed also in Byzantine homilies at this period (as in the homily for Good Friday delivered in *c.*860 by George of Nicomedea). The figure of St John, Chrysostom, the fourth-century patriarch of Constantinople, holds open a Gospel-book with John XV and XVII: 'The Lord said to his disciples: "This I command you, that you love one another."' The text is used in the church readings for Good Friday, linking the rite, the preaching of the saint and the contents of the casket.

The imagery inside the reliquary celebrates the Resurrection: at the top right the Virgin at prayer turns to her Son, depicted as Pantokrator on the left; lower down, angels in diaconal robes attend on them as dignitaries at a 'celestial' court; even lower, the inclusion of Peter and Paul alludes to the concord between the Byzantine and Western churches. Stylistic features suggest that a date in the mid-tenth century is appropriate for these images; schism between the two churches did not occur until 1054.

GUIDO CORNINI

245

Reliquary of the True Cross

Constantinople, eleventh century (central plate); Rhine-Meuse, early thirteenth century (mount, reverse and lid) and seventeenth century (corner angles), silver gilt, silver, copper, *champlevé* enamel, gem stones, wood core, velvet, brown varnish (reverse), total height 30 cm (Byzantine plate: 13 × 10 cm)

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 8099
PROVENANCE: 'former abbey in the Pays de Liège' (Marquet de Vasselot, 1906); formerly collection of M. Vergauwen, Ghent; V. Martin Le Roy, Paris; the gift of V. Martin Le Roy, 1914
SELECTED REFERENCES: Malines 1864, no.482; Weale 1866, pp.90–91; Schlumberger 1896–1905, vol.3, p.237; Marquet de Vasselot 1906, vol.1, pp.19–21 and pls IX–X; Ebersolt 1929, p.29; Borchgrave d'Altena 1931, pp.312–14, Paris 1931, ex cat; Frolow 1961, no.284; Frolow 1965, pp.97, 106, 108, 166, 249, fig.54; Verdier 1982, p.104, fig.16; Lafontaine-Dosogne 1987, vol.2, pp.36–39, fig.18 (second edition, 1995, p.186, fig.5; Paris 1992, no.237; Toulouse 1997, no.250; Klein 2004a, p.251; Paris 2005, no.30

The reliquary, known as Martin Le Roy, consists of a flat rectangular casket with interior fittings and a sliding lid, the traditional form for a Byzantine reliquary of the True Cross. However, only the embossed silver-gilt plate inside is Byzantine. A small compartment at the centre designed to house the relic is now empty; it originally had a double-cross bar. Mary and St John, standing at the foot of the cross, and the two angels above it, conform to the iconography of the Byzantine True Cross reliquary, though such a composition was usually reserved for the decoration of the lid, not the interior. The figure and drapery style is characteristic of Constantinople in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and very close to eleventh-century painting, like the Gospels in the Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, gr. 64, a masterpiece of this style, attributed to the eleventh century.

The wooden core, the framework with alternating panels of filigree and panels of *champlevé* enamel on gilded copper, the reverse decorated with foliage in brown varnish, the lid with a large cross of jewelled filigree on a background of smooth metal, are all work of a Western goldsmith working in the Rhine and Meuse region in the early thirteenth century, in close relationship with such works as the St-Matthias True Cross reliquary in Trier, around 1220, and the famous Hugo d'Oignies' book-binding in Namur, around 1230 (Cologne 1985, H 41, and Cologne 1972, M 6/7). It is very likely that the Byzantine plaque is all that remains of a True Cross reliquary brought back from the Fourth Crusade. The fact that this reliquary was designed in imitation of a Byzantine True Cross one, and the care taken to conserve the original central element did gave a clear indication of the prestigious origins of the relic in the eyes of its new owners, and must have acted as a guarantee of its authenticity.

JANNIC DURAND

246

Two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows

Kastoria, last quarter of twelfth century
Egg tempera on wood, 115 × 77.5 × 3.5 cm

Byzantine Museum, Kastoria
SELECTED REFERENCES: Chatzidakis 1976, pp.184–5, pl.XXXVII, 20–1; London 1978a, no.8; Baltimore 1988, no.9; Belting 1994, pp.262–5, fig.163; New York 1997, no.72; Athens 1999, no.10; Athens 2000, no.8

This double-sided icon from Kastoria had a specific liturgical use. It was a processional icon made to be used during the Passion service on Good Friday.

The front side has the Virgin and Child in the Hodegetria type. She wears a deep-purple maphorion with folds in a darker shade, and a deep-blue himation, trimmed with two gold braids. The Christ Child, likewise in frontal pose, wears an orange chiton and a greyish brown himation. He holds in his left hand a closed scroll and gives a benediction with his right. In the upper part of the icon, two venerating angels, in bust and in miniature, symmetrically flank the Theotokos. They wear a white chiton and a deep-purple himation. The figures are painted on an ochre-yellow ground which imitates gold, and they are framed by a red band. Silver haloes are also found in twelfth-century icons from Cyprus.

On the back Christ is shown lifeless and naked, with a cross-inscribed halo, in front of the Cross against a blue ground. Visible above is the inscription: (BAC)ΙΑΕΥC ΤΗC ΔΟΞΗC (King of Glory) and on the right of the vertical arm of the Cross are the abbreviations: IC XC (Jesus Christ).

Christ as the Man of Sorrows or King of Glory is a new subject, first found in the eleventh century in several media (Pallas 1965, p.201). This is the earliest example of it in a processional icon. It is a startling and emotional icon for showing Christ both dead and in glory, and so seen at the time between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. This moment is symbolically represented in the Byzantine liturgy, and is here portrayed for display at the annual commemoration of the Crucifixion on Good Friday (Pallas 1965, pp.197ff and 280–2; Belting 1980–81, p.5).

Parallels for the Virgin, whose face looks fearful for the future fate of her son, are found in late twelfth-century painting, as in the icon of the Virgin in the Hermitage (Enkleistra) of St Neophytos (*c.*1183) in Cyprus (Papageorgiou 1991, pl.27). Similarly the linear rendering of the hair and the beard of Christ appears in late twelfth-century works, such as Christ from the Lamentation in the Church of the SS. Anargyroi at Kastoria (*c.*1180) (Pelekanidis and Chatzidakis 1984, p.33, pl.12).

ANGELIKI STRATI

247.1–2

UMBRIAN ARTIST, *c.*1250–60

Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows

Egg tempera and gold on panel, left wing 32.2 × 22.8 cm; right wing 32.4 × 22.8 cm

National Gallery, London, NO 6572 and NO 6573
PROVENANCE: left wing: acquired by Adolphe Stoclet from the Genoese dealer Greco, 1926; subsequently in the collection of Madame Feron-Stoclet and of the Feron-Stoclet heirs; acquired by National Gallery, London, 1999; right wing: Ruef, Munich, 1989, lot 113 (catalogued as nineteenth century); private collection; acquired by the National Gallery, London, 1999
SELECTED REFERENCES: Van Marle 1929, p.316; Lion-Goldschmidt 1956, pp.4–5; Kermer 1967, pp.55–56; Van Os 1978, pp.72–3, plate 12, fig b; Belting 1990b, pp.174–7, 276; Garrison 1998, no.267; Cannon 1999; Neff 1999, p.100, note 48; London 2000, no.44, pp.112–13 (S. Avery-Quash); New York 2004, pp.376–7, fig.344.1, 605–6, note 94; London 2005a (S. Di Nepi)

This diptych is the earliest surviving Italian example of the Man of Sorrows paired with the Virgin and Child, a combination that became popular in devotional works throughout Western Europe (Panofsky 1927; Kermer 1967; Belting 1990b; Ridderbos 1998). The Man of Sorrows panel, formerly in the Stoclet Collection, was initially attributed to Giunta Pisano (Van Marle 1929, p.316; Lion-Goldschmidt 1956, p.4) and subsequently to Venice, *c.*1300 (Garrison 1949, 1998, no.267). Following the discovery of the Virgin and Child panel, and the reuniting of the diptych, an association with artists working in North Umbria in the generation after Giunta Pisano, *c.*1250–60, was proposed (Cannon 1999). This mid-thirteenth-century Umbrian connection, and links with Emilia-Romagna, will soon be further explored (Gordon forthcoming).

Recent cleaning has confirmed the high quality and consistency of technique and materials in the two panels. The artist worked confidently, with great fluency, making extensive use of preliminary drawing incised in the gesso ground. This detailed planning may indicate transfer of details from a model. The diptych probably combines elements derived from one or more Byzantine or Byzantine-influenced works rather than following a single prototype. The same pairing appears on the late twelfth-century double-sided icon at Kastoria (cat.246).

The use of art to stimulate affective piety was favoured among the orders of friars, often employing modified versions of images from the Byzantine repertoire (Van Os 1978; Belting 1990b; Derbes and Neff 2004). The diptych was probably produced by an artist with connections to Assisi, the Franciscan headquarters, in a Byzantinising style found in many works – especially crucifixes – made for Franciscan houses in Umbria, Emilia-Romagna and the Marche (Cannon 1999; Cannon 2002, pp.576–8; Bologna 2000, pp.186–203). The diptych was well suited to Franciscan concerns: in earlier Byzantine images the forearms of the Man of Sorrows are not visible, but here they are shown crossed, as became common, with hands placed unusually high on the chest, a pose redolent of prayer gestures and the laying-out of the dead, which made visible the wounds recalled in the stigmata of St Francis (although no pigment marking the wound in Christ's side is now visible) (Neff 1999, pp.87–90). The Virgin's foreknowledge of the future suffering of her child (prolepsis), indicated by her sorrowful expression and gesture, is heightened by the proximity of the dead Christ, towards whom she also gestures and inclines her head. The devotee's close-up view of Christ is made more disturbing by the actions of the hovering bust-length angels, who cover their eyes to avoid the terrible spectacle here openly presented.

JOANNA CANNON

248

FRANCESCO DA PISA (?) (fl. 1298–1301)

Deisis with St Catherine of Alexandria and St Sylvester

Second half of thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar, 87 × 217 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no.1582
SELECTED REFERENCES: Da Morrona 1812, pp.142–4; Marianini 1860–63, p.42; Lanfredini 1889, no.55; Bellini Pietri 1906, pp.71–3; Sirén 1922, p.192; Toesca 1927, p.1057; Garrison 1949, no.433; Vigni 1956, p.37; Carli 1958, pp.42–3; Carli 1974, p.40; Caleca 1978, p.8; Weitzmann 1982, p.73; Tartuferi 1989, pp.34–7; Tartuferi 1990, pp.39, 53; Carli 1994, p.20; Burresi and Caleca 1999, p.49; Burresi 2003, p.132; Folda 2005, pp.445–7; Pisa 2005, pp.82, 202–3; Boskovits, Labriola, Pace and Tartuferi 2006, pp.166, 171

This panel – probably a dossal or retable placed behind the altar, and not a 'paliotto' to judge by its cusped form – is said to have come from the Church of San Silvestro in Pisa. This provenance certainly fits with its iconography, presenting Sylvester on the left side and, on the opposite side, St Catherine, who enjoyed particular popularity in this church. The gradual deterioration of the painting forced Domenico Fiscali, working around 1900, to restore the panel, detaching the painted surface and transferring it onto a metal framework with Gothic arches. Nearly a century later, in about 1990, the painted surface had to be transferred once again to a panel, Fiscali's metal support having rusted and contributed to the flaking of the paint.

These vicissitudes mean that today the sides of the panel are best preserved. Scholars are still debating its authorship, although a possible candidate can be indentified with Francesco da Pisa, who realised – according to Alessio Monciatti – the figure of Christ in the mosaic in the apse of Pisa Cathedral.

Pisan art in the second half of the thirteenth century shows considerable knowledge of Byzantium, thanks to the presence of Pisan merchants in many Eastern cities having, for example, their own quarter in Constantinople. There is evidence that Byzantine artists worked in Pisa, as they also did in Genoa, Venice and other parts of Italy. A similarly shaped panel with an extended Deisis can be found in the collection of the Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai; in this case scholars think that the work was made by a Western ('Veneto-Byzantine') artist to act as an epistyle for a chapel in the monastery used by Latins (Folda 2005).

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO CARLETTI

249

GIUNTA PISANO (fl.1236–54)

Processional cross with Crucifixion on both sides

Thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar wood, 113 × 83 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no.2325
SELECTED REFERENCES: Van Marle 1923, vol.1, p.305; Bacci 1924, p.244; Toesca 1927, p.1037; Sandberg Vavalà 1929, pp.578–88; Paris 1933, p.93; Florence 1937, pp.56–7; Longhi 1948, pp.7–8; Garrison 1949, no.577; Carli 1958, pp.37–8; Boskovits 1973, p.352; Carli 1974, pp.37–8; Tartuferi 1990, pp.14, 22; Tartuferi 1991, pp.18–19, 46–55; Burresi and Caleca 1993, p.31; Carli 1994, pp.15–16; Burresi and Caleca 1999, p.86; Burresi, Carletti and Gioventi 2002, pp.30–2; Burresi 2003, pp.114–15; Pisa 2003, p.454; Testi Cristiani 2004, pp.31–33; Pisa 2005, pp.73, 120–2; Boskovits, Labriola, Pace and Tartuferi 2006, p.163

This is a striking example of Byzantine influence on Western art, with a Crucifixion that dramatically emphasises the dead and sagging body of Christ. This iconography developed first in Byzantium at the beginning of the thirteenth century, with a notable version in a wall painting at Studenica dating from around 1209. In the second half of the century, Cimabue developed this emotional imagery still further. The Italian versions of the Crucifixion differed from the Byzantine ones in having three nails (not four) to fix the body to the Cross, and emphasising the pain and suffering of Christ.

The double-sided processional cross is a fairly recent discovery. It was in the Church of San Paolo a Ripa d'Arno in the second half of the nineteenth century and after several moves it was deposited in the Museo Civico, Pisa, around 1940. At that time the cross was restored and only afterwards was it possible to detect that the back had been entirely repainted. Before this restoration Pèleo Bacci assigned the cross to Giunta Pisano (or Giunta Pisanus Capitini as he signed himself), and this attribution met with broad approval (Toesca, Sandberg, Vavalà, Longhi), apart from Garrison, who ascribed it to the Pisan School between 1260 and 1270. Since then, Carli has maintained the attribution to Giunta (comparing it with the signed cross from the Church of San Ranierino, now also in the Museo di San Matteo). Giunta was one of the most influential painters in the first half of the thirteenth century, and he is known to have signed four painted crosses. He was patronised by the Franciscans, and he gained an eminent position among other artists, similar to that later enjoyed by Cimabue and Giotto.

Recently some scholars have disagreed with the traditional attribution: in 1991 Tartuferi ascribed the cross to a follower of Giunta, the so-called Maestro di San Paolo a Ripa d'Arno, and in 2004 Testi Cristiani considered it the work of another pupil of Giunta.

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO CARLETTI

250

Triptych with Virgin and Child enthroned with angels and saints

Made in Italy, possibly at Rome, Naples or Siena, between *c.* 1315 and *c.*1340
Egg tempera with gold on gesso, canvas and wood, painted in red on verso, 39. 7 × 27.9 cm (open)

Polesden Lacey. The McEwan Collection (the National Trust)
PROVENANCE: bequest of Mrs Ronald Greville to the National Trust with Polesden Lacey, 1942; date and source of her purchase unknown. On verso in black: A.A., n. 37, 64
SELECTED REFERENCES: National Trust 1974, p.24, no.21 (St J. Gore); London 1994, no.223, p.206, pl.p.207 (R. Cormack and M. Vassilaki)

This triptych is notable for its combination of Byzantine and Italian styles and iconography. It is similar in this respect to the Sterbini diptych now at Rome, a triptych at Messina, and the Virgin and Child sent to Cambrai from Rome in 1440 (Garrison 1949, cats 65, 70–2, 120, 247; Shorr 1954, pp.94, 103; Jääskinen 1971, pp.149–75; Zeri and Cicala 1992, pp.55–6; New York 2004, pp. 582–4). Some features and the representations of SS. Kosmas and Damianos, Michael, Nicholas, Anthony Abbot, George, Margaret, Theodosia of Constantinople and Catherine of Alexandria point to a training in the Eastern Mediterranean (Schmidt 2005, fig.212). But other elements reveal familiarity with Sienese painting. The representation of the Virgin and Child closely

follows that of Duccio's Maestà and small tabernacles made at Siena in its wake (Stubblebine 1979, vol. 2, figs 47, 216, 235, 248, 257–60, 266). One such triptych apparently belonged to Peter of Anjou (brother of King Robert of Naples), who lived at Siena between 1314 and 1315 (Maginnis 2001, p.148; Schmidt 2005, pp.242–4). Peter had another brother, Philip, Prince of Taranto, who married Catherine de Valois Courtenay, titular Empress of Constantinople. Perhaps this triptych, with its eastern versions of Margaret, Theodosia and Catherine, was made for this couple (Lock 1995, pp.66–7, 360–1). This might explain the choice of SS. Francis, Dominic and Louis of Toulouse, the newly canonised brother of Robert, Peter and Philip. The same painter may also have produced the Sterbini diptych, which includes St Lawrence, titular saint of the Franciscan church at Naples, Philip, a popular Angevin saint, and St Louis of Toulouse.

In conclusion, this hybrid triptych was probably made by a Greek painter working in Italy for the Angevin rulers of the Kingdom of Naples (London 1994, p.206; Kosztolnyik 1996, pp.239–54; Acheimastou-Potamianou 1998, pp.64–7; L'Europe 2001, pp.153–235).

REBECCA W. CORRIE

251

Icon with the Virgin and Child, Church Feasts and Saints

Venice (?), mid-fourteenth century
Egg tempera on wood, stucco, gold glass, 42 × 30 × 1 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv. no. 2972
PROVENANCE: acquired in Athens by Anthony Benakis from the art-dealer Theodore Zoumboulakis, 5 March 1934
SELECTED REFERENCES: Xyngopoulos 1936, pp.1–4, pls 1–4; Athens 1994, no.43, p.222 (M. Vassilaki); Baltoyanni 1994, no.20, pls 39–40; Athens 2000, no.73, pp.448–9 (M. Vassilaki); Athens 2001, no.172, pp.318–20 (M. Vassilaki); Gordon 2002; Kouzeli 2002; Milanou 2002; Vassilaki 2002; New York 2004, no.305, pp.305–6 (M. Vassilaki); Papastavrou 2005, pp.267–8, fig.14

The central panel shows the Virgin Eleousa holding the Christ Child. This is crowned by an arch resting on thin, spiral semi-columns. The spandrels of the arch are covered by two medallions of the Evangelists Luke and Matthew and acanthus leaves at the edges, all of which are made in the gold glass technique (*verre églomisé*). The entire composition is surrounded by a wide frame divided into twenty rectangular compartments, in which ten of the Great Feasts alternate with busts of Apostles.

This icon represents a unique combination of different techniques on a single wooden surface: egg tempera for the central representation of the Virgin and Child and the busts of the Apostles, gold glass for the Evangelists on the spandrels and relief stucco for the Great Feasts. The techniques of gold glass and relief stucco were in use in Italy at the time, while egg tempera is the traditional technique for icon painting.

In this panel iconographic and stylistic features of Late Byzantine painting are combined with elements drawn from Italian and particularly Venetian art. For example, the rendering of the Virgin's face with its taut skin, almond-shaped eyes, arched eyebrows, her punched halo and some features of her dress are all to be found in fourteenth-century Venetian painting, especially in the work of Paolo Veneziano (Muraro 1970, pp.116–17, pls 120–1). Technical analysis has shown that the priming of the panel was in the two-layer gesso technique (gesso grosso and gesso sottile) commonly practised in central and north Italy. By contrast, the posture of the Child finds its parallel in an icon of the Virgin and Child in the Philotheou monastery on Mount Athos, dated to the middle of the fourteenth century (Tsigaridas 1992, p.654, pl.355) and the iconography of the Great Feasts on the frame is identical with that on the silver revetment of an icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in Vatopedi monastery on Mount Athos, dated to the first decades of the fourteenth century (Tsigaridas and Loverdou-Tsigarida 2006, pp.307–17, figs 234–6, 240–7).

All these elements may suggest that the panel was produced in a Venetian workshop, but by a Byzantine painter, who was better acquainted with Byzantine than with Venetian traditions.

MARIA VASSILAKI

252

Icon with Virgin and Child

Mid-thirteenth century
Tempera and gold on poplar, 80.2 × 59.7 cm

Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, inv. no. 1576
SELECTED REFERENCES: Marianini 1860–63, p.48; Lanfredini 1889, no.509; Supino 1894, p.32; Bellini Pietri 1906, p.69; Garrison 1949, no.109; Vigni 1950, pp.40–1; Ragghianti 1955, p.8; Carli 1958, p.44; Carli 1974, p.38; Caleca 1978, p.8; Caleca 1986, I, p.223, II, pp.533–4; Carli 1994, p.14; Burresi and Caleca 1999, p.62; Burresi, Carletti and Giometti 2002, pp.26–30; Burresi 2003, p.119; Pisa 2005, pp.78–9, 172–3

This panel entered the Museo Civico, Pisa, in 1861 from the Benedictine monastery of San Matteo. It may be the panel listed by Marianini as a 'Greco-Pisan' painting; Lanfredini uses the same definition, adding that it is in 'very poor condition – panel broken'. This break corresponds today with a vertical gap dividing the icon in two. The figures are painted on a thick panel with a gilded background; the frame projects slightly and is carved from the same wood. At the top are the abbreviations in Greek of 'Mother of God'. On the lower frame traces of the artist's signature remain; this has been variously interpreted and corresponds more or less to: 'M[AGIST]E[R] QUI VOCATUR F[...]SINELLUS ME PINXIT'. The name of the painter is fragmented by the vertical split, but no possible completion of the name corresponds to any known artist of the time. Perhaps for this reason scholars have sought stylistic links in diverse geographical locations, predominantly around Lucca. Following Garrison, Raggianti identified stylistic features close to those of the Maestro delle Oblate, active in the first half of the thirteenth century. Carli sees similarities with the *Madonna di sotto gli Organi* (fig.41), venerated in Pisa Cathedral and traditionally ascribed to Berlinghiero. The origins of this icon are also difficult to determine because of the strong Byzantine content in the art of Western Tuscany in the thirteenth century. Carli maintains that this icon and the one in the cathedral are both Pisan. The presence of inscriptions in both Latin and Greek seems to confirm these evaluations, placing the present work at a crossroad between Byzantium and the West.

MARIAGIULIA BURRESI AND LORENZO CARLETTI

253

GENTILE BELLINI (d. 1507)

Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary

Venice, 1472–73
Egg tempera with gold and silver on panel, 102.3 × 37.2 cm

National Gallery, London, no 6590
PROVENANCE: Scuola della Carità, Venice; Francis I, Vienna, by 1821; August Lederer, Vienna (by 1925); his wife Serena Lederer (her collection was seized in 1940); Erich Lederer; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, by 1952, inv.no.9105; returned to Erich Lederer's heirs; sold Christie's, London, 12 December 2001 (lot 61); purchased by the National Gallery, 2002
SELECTED REFERENCES: Planiscig 1928, p.51; Berenson 1957, p.28, pl.CLXXXII; Schaffran 1957, pp.153–7; Vakalopoulos 1970, fig.20, p.242; Vienna 1973, pp.19–20, pl.II; Mayer zur Capellen 1985, no.A 26, p.141; Heinemann 1991, fig.206, pp.114–15; Venice 1994, fig.91, p.279 and pp.285, 287–8; Ginzburg 2000, fig.80, pp.56–8; Welch 2000, fig.64, pp.131–4, especially 133; Campbell 2002, no.5, pp.24–5; Kenny 2005, p.108

The painting depicts Cardinal Bessarion in profile, on the left, kneeling in prayer before the Byzantine reliquary of the True Cross (Schioppalalba 1767; Fogolari 1922–23; Frolow 1961, no.872, pp.563–5, Venice 1994, pp.369–78), which he donated to one of the most ancient Venetian confraternities, the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria dei Battuti della Carità. Two brothers wearing the insignia and the habits of the Scuola pray on the right. They have been identified as the Guardian Grande and the Vicario of the Scuola, Ulisse Aliotto and Andrea della Sega, key figures for its acquisition (London 2005A, no.6, p.38).

After playing a key role in the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1439) as a leader of the pro-Unionists, Johannes Bessarion (Trebizond, 1399/1400? – Ravenna, 1472), the eminent Greek theologian and scholar of prodigious literary activity, converted to Catholicism and was appointed Cardinal of the title of the Twelve Holy Apostles. Although twice a candidate for the papacy, he made his greatest impact in the West as a scholar with vast philosophical erudition, head of an 'academy' in Rome and systematic manuscript collector.

The reliquary was formally donated to the confraternity on 29 August 1463 to mark the Cardinal's election as a member of the Scuola but actually reached the Scuola in a huge ceremonial procession only in July 1472, the year of Bessarion's death. It was kept attached on a stand of elaborate Venetian-style metalwork, in the confraternity's albergo (meeting-room). Bellini's painting was commissioned as the door of the tabernacle that housed the precious gift (two keyholes are still visible on the right) and functioned as such until 1744 (Moschini Marconi 1955, no.216, p.192). The picture, just like the original half-length portrait of the Cardinal, attributed to Bellini too which decorated the albergo but was stolen in 1540 (Moschini Marconi 1962, no.347, pp.200–1), pays tribute to the Venetian rather than the Byzantine history of the reliquary as well as to the individuals associated with it (Cutler 1995A, pp.257–8).

Bellini, a master in portraiture fascinated with the legend of the True Cross and eastern iconography, depicts Cardinal Bessarion, identified by his bulbous nose and long beard, in black monastic garments of the Orthodox church and the reliquary virtually its actual size. However, the sliding lid, a fourteenth-century Constantinopolitan (?) Crucifixion icon (New York 2004, no.325, pp.540–1) with later silver revetments, has not been depicted.

DIMITRA KOTOULA

254

Wall mosaic with head of an angel

Torcello, second half of eleventh century
Mosaic, 31.6 × 24.6 cm

Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Objets d'Art, OA 6460
PROVENANCE: mosaic of the Last Judgment on the west wall of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello; gift of E.-D. Gerspach, 1892
SELECTED REFERENCES: Demus 1944, pp.43–4; Bettini 1954, p.503, fig.382; Andreescu 1972, pp.198–9; Andreescu 1976, p.270, fig.39; Andreescu 1981, pp.15–130; Paris 1992, no.144; New York 1997, no.293; Rome 1997B, no.227; Andreescu 2004, p.184; Saint-Denis 2007, no.63

This fragment, which has undergone almost no repairs, comes from the west wall of Santa Maria Assunta, Torcello, in the Venetian lagoon. The wall has a monumental composition of the Last Judgment. This fragment belonged in the third row from the top where, on either side of the Deisis, angels' heads appeared behind the seated Apostles. The two arcs of a circle surviving behind each side of the angel's neck correspond to the haloes of the two Apostles between whose heads the angel emerged. Like a number of other fragments from Torcello, the Louvre head was removed during the restoration of the west wall in the second half of the nineteenth century (Andreescu 1976, 1981, 2004). Some heads were taken down and replaced with copies; the copies were later removed in their turn and replaced by the original if available. But some of the originals, including the Louvre head, were plundered by the mosaic workers who had no compunction in removing some of the copies as well (Andreescu 1972 and 1998).

Andreescu has identified various phases in the Last Judgment mosaics; the first campaign was carried out by a Constantinopolitan workshop in the second half of the eleventh century and the Louvre head belongs to this campaign. Later campaigns were carried out by Italian mosaicists. This powerful piece possesses the qualities of the finest pieces produced by the workshops of Constantinople in the middle and latter half of the eleventh century, for example the celebrated panel of Constantine IX Monomachus and Zoë in St Sophia, or the mosaics at Daphni (*c.*1100) and Hosios Loukas. The technique and the shading of the colours are similar to those used on the angel of the Annunciation on the triumphal arch in St Sophia, Kiev, a building begun in 1037 with mosaics by Byzantine artists of the middle or second half of the eleventh century. The angel of Kiev and the angel of Torcello are almost contemporary; they illustrate the wide geographical area covered by the workshops of Constantinople.

JANNIC DURAND

255

Wall painting with St Catherine

1233–34
Detached fresco, 211 × 97 × 7 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, Byzantine and Christian Museum, Athens, BXM 1067
PROVENANCE: Attica, Chapel of St Nicholas in the Cave Monastery, Penteli
SELECTED REFERENCES: Mouriki 1973–74, pp.79–119 (with earlier bibliography); Athens 1986, no.32, p.45 (E. Kounoupiotou-Manolessou); Florence 1986, no.12, pp.49–50 (E. Kounoupiotou-Manolessou); Papageorgiou 1987, pp.193–292; Chatzidakis 2000, pp.267–9; Byzantine Museum 2005, p.111, fig.88 (A. Katselaki)

The fresco of St Catherine was located on the south side of the templon-screen in the north side chapel of the Cave Monastery, and identified by the inscription Η ΑΓΙΑ (ΑΙΚΑΤ)ΕΡΙΝΑ (Mouriki 1973–74, p.99, pl.XXVIII). St Catherine is shown full length and turned in supplication towards the sanctuary. She wears a crown, earrings and luxurious imperial raiment, with a gem-studded *loros* and a thorakion as a kind of shield, as befits her aristocratic origin.

This work, which refers to the art of portable icons, is appropriate to the votive role of the portrait, stressing the eschatological character of the decoration in this funerary chapel. It represents a conservative trend in painting, characterised by the survival of iconographic and stylistic elements of Komnenian tradition (Mouriki 1973–74, pp.106–7, 110–11, 113). The style echoes aesthetic conceptions of the twelfth century (Mouriki 1973–74, p.106; Chatzidakis 2000, p.268), showing how artists in thirteenth-century Greece looked back to this period for inspiration within a world dominated by Westerners, who had taken over the region after the Sack of Constantinople in 1204. A similar conception in painting is found in the north side chapel in the narthex of the Church of the Virgin at Studenica and in creations of local workshops, such as in a group of wall paintings in the Church of St Peter at Kalyvia Kouvara in Attica (Mouriki 1973–74, pp.107, 111; Florence 1986, p.50; Chatzidakis 2000, p.268).

IRENE THEOCHAROPOULOU

256

Funerary cloth with Othon de Grandon and the Virgin and Christ

Cyprus, last quarter of the thirteenth century
Embroidered taffeta and silk, 88 × 328 cm

Historisches Museum, Berne
PROVENANCE: Lausanne Cathedral
SELECTED REFERENCES: Carr 1995A, pp.243–4; Folda 1995B, p.216; Wilckens 1995, pp.279–85; Bacci 2000B, pp.373–4; Muthesius 2004, pp.240–1; Carr 2005, pp.307–8; Geneva 2006, no.181, pp.153–4 (M. Martiniani-Reber) (Lit.)

Improperly labelled as an 'antependium', this embroidered silk was originally meant as a funerary cloth, used to embellish the canopied tomb of the knight Othon de Grandson (1240–1328) in the choir of Lausanne Cathedral. Grandson was a prominent local aristocrat, who had been involved in the events connected to the fall, in 1291, of the last Latin stronghold in Palestine, the port of Acre, from where he fled to Cyprus; he later served as a diplomat for King Edward I of England. He is seen here kneeling and with joined hands in the act of recommending his soul to the mediation of the Virgin Mary, who sits on a throne with Christ on her left arm and is flanked by two censing angels.

On technical grounds the silk is characterised by an extensive use of a gilded silver thread, whereas its stylistic, iconographic and compositional features are essentially borrowed from Byzantine tradition, although combined with minor details of Western origins, such as the representation of the kneeling donor and his coat-of-arms. Such unusual features have encouraged scholars to recognise this item as one of the de luxe textiles exported from Cyprus throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages, and recorded by cathedral inventories in Western countries as works of opus Cyprense. The only other example of a medieval Cypriot textile that has been recognised by scholars is the large embroidered antependium offered to Pisa Cathedral in 1325 by the Latin archbishop of Nicosia, John of Conti, currently in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Pisa. That textile, displaying an essentially Gothic imagery interspersed with quotations from Byzantine iconography, points to the wealth of models on which Cypriot artists were able to draw for inspiration in order to satisfy their Latin and Greek patrons.

MICHELE BACCI

257

Glazed bowl with a representation of a fish

Cyprus, Paphos region, first half of the thirteenth century
Clay, lead-glaze, height 9.3 cm; diameter 17 cm; diameter of base 6.8 cm

Leventis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv.no.B/2003/070
SELECTED REFERENCE: Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2004, no.A1, p.97

The ceramic fabric is red and rather rough and hard. The vase has a carinated body and a foot

with upward-turned ring base. The body has slightly curving walls that form an angle with the straight rim. Incised on the coat of white slip on the inside surface is an impressive large fish. Its body is curved, in line with the edge of the bottom, and it has a forked tail. The head, which follows on from the body, ends in triangular mouthparts and has one large, wide-open eye. A spiralling line denotes the scales on the body. Incised in the field is a fusiform or spindle-like motif with cross-hatching. The craftsperson's skill in fitting the figure of the fish into the circular surface of the bottom of the bowl is particularly noteworthy. Brownish-yellow and green brush strokes enliven the *sgraffito* decoration.

Fish are frequently found as decorative subjects on Byzantine vases, particularly those of the Middle Byzantine period. Some of the best-known vases with depictions of fish were those that were part of the cargo of a ship that sank off the island of Castellorizo in the early thirteenth century (Philotheou and Michailidou 1986). Around the outside of the bowl there are slip-painted wavy and spiralling lines. The inside of the bowl has a green-tinged glaze, while the outside has a yellow glaze.

Features such as the texture of the ceramic fabric and its shape and decoration indicate that this vase is a product of the Paphos workshops in south-western Cyprus.

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

258

Glazed bowl with a representation of a falconer

Cyprus, Lapithos region, early fifteenth century
Clay, lead glaze, height 9.8 cm; diameter 13.8 cm; diameter of base 7.3 cm

Leventis Municipal Museum, Nicosia, inv. no. 8/2003/021
SELECTED REFERENCE: Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2004, no. 7, p. 57

The ceramic fabric is ochre brown and rather fine-grained. The vase is of carinated shape, having a raised foot with flaring ring base, and a body with curving sides forming an angle with the high straight rim. Represented in fine *sgraffito* on the white slip coating both the inside and the outside is a falconer with his falcon. He turns slightly towards the bird and wears a long cloak down to his knees. His hands are not visible but are implied beneath his cloak, which is decorated with alternating wavy and straight lines. The figure has short curly hair and large eyes. Inscribed in the field behind him is a volute guilloche. Around the inside face of the rim runs a narrow band with a wavy line, and the outside surface is covered by a wide band with double guilloche and convoluted hatching in the interstices. Alternating yellow and green brush strokes variegate the *sgraffito* decoration. Features of the clay and the bowl's shape and decoration mean that the bowl can be attributed to the workshops at Lapithos, in the foothills of the Pentadaktylos mountain range in northern Cyprus.

Hunting with birds of prey was a particularly popular sport in the Middle Ages. From information gleaned mainly from the texts of travellers, it seems that in the Medieval Kingdom of Cyprus (1191–1489) kings, courtiers and nobles kept and trained falcons for hunting. Scenes of hunting with falcons are not rare as decoration on Byzantine ceramics. One of the very well-known examples is a falconer on a vase in the Pierides Collection, which is dated to the thirteenth century (Papanikola-Bakirtzi 1989, no. 5).

DEMETRA PAPANIKOLA-BAKIRTZI

259

Capital with angels

Thirteenth century
Marble, 29.4 × 30.5 × 26.5 cm; diameter of base 21 cm

The Hellenic Ministry of Culture, 23rd Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities, Chalkis, inv. no. ΠΛ314
PROVENANCE: Church of St George, Thebes
SELECTED REFERENCE: Touloupa 1966, p. 205, pl. 210

On this white marble column capital (intact with one side unworked) are represented in high relief three full-bodied angels with outspread wings. Each wears a short, sleeved chiton tied at the waist. The angel on the front holds two laurel wreaths in raised hands, while the angels on the two sides each hold a cross. In the spaces between them are filling motifs of acanthus leaves.

The decoration of column capitals with figures in bust, on three or even all four sides is encountered in Byzantine sculptural works, mainly from Constantinople, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (New York 2004, nos 50, 54, 55). However, on the column capital from Thebes, the rendering of the standing figures in vivid *contrapposto*, as if rotating, with the right leg to the fore and the left flexed towards the back, the luxuriant wavy hair hanging freely on both shoulders, and the deep soft drapery of the garments, reveal a pronounced Westernising disposition and suggest an attribution to a workshop familiar with Western models. This phenomenon is observed both in paintings and in sculptures produced in the period of Latin rule. In analogous style are the ciborium arches with scenes from the Christological cycle (thirteenth century), which were found in Athens and are now housed in the Byzantine and Christian Museum (Papadopoulou 2002, figs 171, 173, 174), and the two arches adorning the north and the west vault of the Paregoritissa church in Arta (1294–96) (Papadopoulou 2002, figs 171, 173, 174).

On the basis of the stylistic similarities between these three works, the capital can be dated to the thirteenth century, the early period of Latin rule in Thebes. This sculpted architectural element, a random find in the modern Church of St George, decorated a church that was possibly renovated in this period by a Latin donor, a resident of the city, whose aesthetic preferences were adopted by the marble-carver.

ANDROMACHE KATSELAKI

260

The Melisende Psalter covers

Jerusalem, *c.* 1131–43
Ivory, 22 × 14.5 × 0.5 cm; silver and silk, 21.5 × 4.5 cm

The British Library, London, Egerton 1139
PROVENANCE: probably Melisende, Queen of Jerusalem (1105–61), or possibly her sister Yvette (1119–78), abbess of St Lazarus, Bethany; Frère Pouz Daubon, late twelfth or thirteenth century, the Grande Chartreuse, Grenoble; Dr Ambroise Comarmond, Lyons, *c.* 1843; Guglielmo Libri (1802–1869), mathematician and bibliophile; Payne and Foss, booksellers, 1845; purchased by the British Museum, London, November 1845
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kühnel 1991; Folda 1995A, pp. 137–63, pls 6.8–6.12; Backhouse 2006

Surviving medieval 'treasure' bindings designed to embellish luxury books are extremely rare. These remarkable ivory covers and spine panel of embroidery appear to have been made for a psalter intended for Melisende (1105–61), queen of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem. Entries in the psalter's calendar recording the death of Melisende's father, King Baldwin II (d. 1131), the third king of Jerusalem, and her husband, Fulk of Anjou (d. 1143), show her connection with the book and its probable date.

The delicate silk panel used to adorn the spine is decorated with small patterned crosses embroidered with silver and silk thread on a monochrome white textile. In materials and technique it is typical of twelfth-century Byzantine embroidery.

The ivory covers are elaborately carved, and include sophisticated iconography relating to the contents and the owner of the manuscript. The upper cover includes six scenes from the life of David, who in the medieval period was considered to be the author of the Psalms. In the centre of the panel David prepares to fling a stone at Goliath, and then receives Goliath's sword from the priest Abimelech. Interwoven between the six medallions are struggles between personifications of virtues and vices. For example, just below the Goliath episode *Fortitudo* (Fortitude) in armour, drives his spear through *Avaritia* (Avarice).

On the lower ivory cover a king carries out the Six Corporal Works of Mercy listed in Matthew xxv, 35–36, apparently the earliest representation of these acts in Christian art. In the lowest pair of medallions the king visits a sick man sitting up in bed and a prisoner with stocks on his arms and legs. In each scene the king is attired in a different type of imperial Byzantine costume, indicative of the many cross-cultural currents present in this extraordinary manuscript and its covers.

KATHLEEN DOYLE

261

The Four Gospels, folio 55*r*

Constantinople, beginning of the fourteenth century
Manuscript on parchment, 33.5 × 25 cm

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Greek manuscript 54
PROVENANCE: collection of Cardinal Niccolò Ridolfi (d. 1550); Bibliothèque royale, Paris, 1599
SELECTED REFERENCES: Bordier 1883, pp. 227–31; Paris 1958, no. 79; Paris 1992, no. 345, p. 430; Maxwell 2000; New York 2004, no. 162; Maxwell 2006

This sumptuous bilingual edition of the four Gospels, produced in Constantinople at the end of the thirteenth century, is remarkable on more than one score. It is one of the few Late Byzantine versions of the Gospels to be illustrated throughout: in addition to the portraits of the four Evangelists, each occupying a whole page, the text of the Gospels is illustrated with 22 miniatures and there are a further 30 miniatures which are either unfinished or whose execution has been prepared by the drawing of a frame which has never been filled. The incompleteness of the illustration affords a glimpse of the various stages in the work of the artists, from the sketching in of the outline of the miniature to the final coat of paint, taking in the working drawing and the application of gold leaf. The presentation of the text is no less original. It is arranged over two columns: the left-hand column, the wider of the two, is reserved for the Greek text; the right-hand column contains the Latin translation but is incomplete – the whole of St Luke's Gospel and part of St John's Gospel are missing. Four colours have been used for the writing of the text: light red for narrative, dark red for the words of Christ, blue for quotations from the Old Testament and the words of Christ's disciples, dark brown for the works of the Pharisees, Judas and others. This highly original system has not, however, been applied coherently throughout the whole text. The backward-looking Greek writing, characteristic of the first decades of the dynasty of the Palaiologoi, shows that the manuscript was copied in Constantinople; it was undoubtedly intended for a high-ranking person of Latin origin.

CHRISTIAN FÖRSTEL

262

Missal with Crucifixion, folio 191*v*

Acre, third quarter of the thirteenth century
Parchment, 32 × 23 cm

Capitolo della Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, Perugia, Ms. 6
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rome 1953, no. 157, p. 114 (G. Muzzioli); Buchthal 1957, pp. 48–51; Weitzmann 1965; Pace 1986A; New York 2004, no. 276, pp. 466–7 (R. Corrie); Folda 2005, pp. 295–9; Furlan 2005; Perugia 2005, no. 9, pp. 186–7 (A. Santacicchia); Magionami 2006, pp. 47–9

The full-page miniature with the Crucifixion (fol. 191*v*) follows the Byzantine formula of a slumped, dead Christ which was incorporated into Italian art by Giunta Pisano (cat. 249). However, it diverges from Byzantium by accepting the new Northern European iconography of three rather than four nails for affixing Christ to the Cross. The artist has acquired a knowledge of Byzantine art which is now known to us through the thirteenth-century wall paintings of the Balkans, such as those in Mileševo and Sopočani; he also knows the work of northern Italian art of the same period, and was presumably trained there before he travelled to the East. The Latin script of the missal is written by a French hand, and other miniatures in the book (angels adoring the bust of Christ in a clypeus, four Initials with the Nativity, Resurrection, and two scenes of the Eucharistic liturgy) may have been done also by other illuminators within the same workshop.

The Perugia Missal was the pivotal evidence in Buchthal's revisionist study of 'Crusader Art' in 1957, as of all the manuscripts that he wanted to attribute to Western artists working in the Holy Land this was the only one with a documentary clue: the calendar entry for 4 July, 'Dedicatio ecclesie acconensis', a clear indication that the manuscript was intended for use in a church at Acre (Akko). The manuscript reveals the composite nature of art in Acre, capital of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem (or kingdom of Acre), after that city was lost in 1187 and until it too fell to the Arabs in 1291. A feature of this manuscript and others produced in the city were their interweaving of traditions from East and West. Striking similarities between this Bible and the St Francis frescoes in the Kalenderhane Cami in Constantinople (shortly before 1261) testify significantly to the broad geography of this 'language' which, on one side undoubtedly echoes specific Western areas, on the other side cannot be singled out with 'attributions' to masters active in France or in the Venetian area.

The presence of the missal in Perugia has been plausibly credited to the titular Patriarch of Jerusalem or to the Canons of the Holy Sepulchre: in the early fourteenth century the Canons moved from Barletta to Perugia.

VALENTINO PACE

263

GERMAN ARTIST (?), THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Leaf from a model book, showing Christ and Zacchaeus, and St Theodore and St George

Silverpoint and sepia with red ink on vellum, 36 × 22 cm

Augustinermuseum, Städtische Museen Freiburg, Freiburg im Breisgau, inv. no. 023/1C
PROVENANCE: discovered in 1912 by H. Flamm in a municipal account book of 1655 in the Freiburg Municipal Archives
SELECTED REFERENCES: Flamm 1915; Weitzmann 1966B, p. 78–81; Alexander 1992, p. 98, fig. 160; Scheller 1995, no. 8, pp. 136–43; New York 1997, no. 318, p. 482 (J. Folda); Athens 2001, no. 168, pp. 308–9 (D. Zinke); Folda 2005; Folda 2007, fig. 8.7

The upper half shows Christ and Zacchaeus, as narrated by the Gospel of St Luke (xix, 1–10). Upon Christ's entrance to Jericho the tax collector Zacchaeus climbed up a sycamore tree to get a better view. Zacchaeus is on top of a tree and Christ is talking to him. The Apostle Peter is following Christ and a second Apostle after him, of whom only a finger has remained, close to Peter's shoulder. The scene is drawn in silverpoint and the top of the tree has a greenish wash. Fol. 1a describes the scene as: ubi Zacchaeus in arbore (where Zacchaeus was in a tree).

The lower half of the leaf shows two military saints on horseback. An inscription above the halo of the right saint reads: Theodorus and a second inscription above the halo of the left saint reads: consodalis (companion). The name of this second saint is not specified in the index of fol. 1a, in which the scene is described as: Theodorus equitans cum alio (Theodore riding with another). This saint has been identified as St George on the basis of his physiognomy and on the fact that St Theodore's companion saint is usually St George. This scene is drawn in sepia with red ink.

The drawing with Christ and Zacchaeus probably copies a miniature, but most likely an icon was the model for the scene on the lower half. St George of this drawing has been compared with the same saint on the British Museum icon (inv. no. 1984.6-1.1), which is believed to have been painted by a Crusader artist, most possibly French (Folda in New York 1997, p. 482; for the icon see most recently Cormack 2007A, pp. 69–83, figs 41–3, and Folda 2007). A similar representation of the two saints is to be found in an icon at Sinai dated *c.* 1260 (New York 2004, no. 231, p. 376 [J. Folda], Folda 2007, fig. 8.2).

As one of the three surviving leaves (fol. 1a) of this manuscript contains an index of 78 scenes from the Bible and lives of saints, it can be suggested that these leaves belong to a book of drawings made by an itinerant artist.

MARIA VASSILAKI

264

Commentary on Genesis with drawing of Christ, folio 155*v*

Cyprus (?), *c.* 1175–1225; fifteenth century
Paint on parchment, 33 × 54 cm

The President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, ms clx 3
SELECTED REFERENCES: Velmans 1974; Hutter 1997, vol. 3.1, no. 28, pp. 71–83, vol. 3.2, figs 257–357; Hutter 1999; Cormack 2007A, pp. 24–6

This manuscript has a long history. It was originally produced in the first half of the eleventh century to include the Commentary of St John Chrysostom on Genesis (homilies 31–67) and had no illustrations but simple headbands at the beginning of each homily. In the late twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century 145 drawings were added in the margins by several artists (112 drawings are preserved). In the fifteenth century the manuscript was in the hands of a certain Michael Frangopoulos; it seems to have reached Oxford by the late sixteenth century.

Hutter has suggested that the addition of the marginal drawings transformed it into a 'model book' for use by artists in a workshop. The

drawings show single figures of saints, of Christ and of the Virgin, and they seem to copy Cypriot wall paintings and icons. Folio 155v, which shows the bust of Christ in frontal pose, blessing and holding a scroll, has been compared with the thirteenth-century icon of Christ from the Church of the Virgin at Moutoullas (Hutter 1999, figs 28–9). The almond-shaped, rolling eyes of Christ in both the icon and the drawing are a Western feature and reflect historical circumstances and the presence of Westerners – Cyprus was ruled by the Lusignan dynasty from 1191. According to Hutter, who has distinguished the hand of three artists in these drawings, Christ on folio 155v was produced by painter C, whom she considers slightly later in date than painters A and B.

The drawings in the margins of the manuscript certainly give evidence of painters practising their skills by copying single representations of saints. This does not mean that it was a systematic reference set of models for other artists, but may simply show that the manuscript was considered handy for use as a sketchbook.

MARIA VASSILAKI

265

The doors of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto, Atrani

1087
Brass, 333 × 184 cm

Church of San Salvatore de' Birecto, Atrani
SELECTED REFERENCES: Pansa 1724, vol.1, p.40; Camera 1881, pp.243–4; Götz 1971, pp.198–200; Matthiae 1971, pp.91–2, figs 67–70; Frazer 1973; Angelucci 1988; Polacco 1988; Iacobini 2007

Today installed at the entrance of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto in the small town of Atrani, near Amalfi, these doors were originally planned for San Sebastiano dei Mangani (an intriguing allusion to a Constantinopolitan site) in the same town. A Latin inscription informs us that Pantaleon, son of Pantaleon Viarecta, ordered the doors for the salvation of his soul in 1087. The doors have four silver-inlaid panels with images of Christ and the Virgin interceding, St Pantaleon, protector of the donor, and St Sebastian, titular saint of the church, for which the doors were originally commissioned. These four panels are centred within a field of foliate crosses. The doors should correctly be described as brass, and not bronze, since their main components are copper and zinc, with a small quantity of lead and tin (an alloy known as *auricalchum* in Latin, since it closely resembles gold). Plates made of silver were inserted into the faces and hands of the figures, and niello was used to highlight the design and the drapery, and cinnabar for the shoes of the Virgin and the inscriptions.

The programme substantially repeats that found on the doors of the Cathedral at Amalfi of 1065, the first of this type and the forerunner of a number of other doors in South Italy and Venice. They are the model for the Atrani doors, with Christ and the interceding Virgin, plus the patron St Andrew and St Peter. However the Atrani doors have some slight but significant modifications. The position of the Virgin, to the right of Christ, is more in line with traditional iconography of the Deisis, even if the image of Christ has a triumphal overtone, with his raised hand. Unlike the doors in Amalfi and elsewhere, the standing figures are here placed against a plain background, undoubtedly in imitation of the solid, plain surfaces of gold that were largely used in Byzantium. The image of St Sebastian in military garb fits his usual iconography, while the medical saint St Pantaleon, is oddly presented as a bishop with an *omophorion*. This suggests that the inscriptions were added later, and that Pantaleon only became the patron after the doors were made and adapted a different saint to be his own patron saint.

Despite some roughness of design, it can hardly be doubted that the doors were produced in Constantinople, although this has been questioned. For such a commission, a patron from the Amalfi region could have easily turned to Constantinople, where the Amalfitani had a well-established colony, and where the Amalfi doors were made some twenty years earlier.

VALENTINO PACE

8
Beyond Byzantium

266

Embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria

Moscow (?), 1498 (?)
Taffeta and damask, embroidered with gold and silver threads, 95.1 × 98 cm

State Historical Museum, Moscow (15455 shch/a.s.-s)
PROVENANCE: from the collections of M. Zaitsevskii, then of p.Shchukin; entered the State Historical Museum, Moscow, in 1905
SELECTED REFERENCES: Scepkina 1954; Maiasova 1971, figs 27–8; Evseeva 1999, pp.430–8; Preobrazhenskii 2003, pp.201–28; Lidov 2004, pp.291–321; New York 2004, no.195, pp.322–3 (L. Evseeva); Lidov 2006

We see not merely a procession but the famous Tuesday miraculous performance of the Hodegetria icon, which took place in Constantinople from the twelfth century to 1453. In the centre, as in other depictions of this miracle, is an icon-bearer, stretching out his hands and carrying the heavy panel effortlessly. This is the miracle of the metamorphosis of the icon into a weightless image, which glided around the crowded square in front of the Hodegon monastery every Tuesday morning (Lidov 2004). The bearer and those around him wear the red garments of the confraternity of the Hodegetria icon, who alone could perform the Tuesday miracle.

The paradox of this Russian embroidery is that the miracle seems to take place not in Constantinople (by this date under Ottoman control), but in Moscow and in the presence of members of the princely family and of the Russian Church (Scepkina 1954). The three men in crown-shaped caps have been identified as the Grand Prince Ivan III, his son Vassili and his young grandson Dimitri. Only two of the three, Prince Ivan and his grandson, are depicted with a nimbus – a sign of royal status. This detail helps to date the textile to 1498, when the coronation of Dimitri took place (Evseeva 1999). The iconography suggests a Muscovite performance of the Tuesday miracle, unknown from any other sources, maybe to support Russia's claim to be the successor to the Byzantine Empire after its fall in 1453 (Lidov 2006).

Perhaps the embroidery, designed to act as a cloth hanging beneath an icon (podea in Greek, podvesnaia pelena in Russian), adorned a replica of the Hodegetria icon of Constantinople, and was venerated in the Ascension Convent of the Kremlin in Moscow. One attribution of the embroidery is to the Kremlin workshop of the Grand Princess Helena Voloshanka (Maiasova 1971). Both the Moscow attribution and the dating are controversial (Preobrazhenskii 2003).

ALEXEI LIDOV

267

Embroidered image of St George

Moldavia, 1500
Gold, silver and silk threads on red silk, transferred to red velvet, 125 × 97 cm

National History Museum of Romania, Bucharest, inv.75.062
PROVENANCE: presented to the Monastery of St George tou Zographou, Mount Athos, 1500–01; confiscated by French soldiers under the command of General Maurice Sarrail, 1916–17; presented to the Kingdom of Romania, 1917; deposited at the Muzeul Armatei (now Muzeul Militar National), Bucharest, 1923; transferred to the Muzeul National de Istorie a României, Bucharest, *c.*1987
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov 1902, pp.250–1; Ivanov 1908, no.15, p.185; Anon. 1917; Elian 1965, no.1198, pp.784–5, with bibliography; Năsturel 1996, pp.12–16; Trieste 1999, no.62, pp.54–5, 196 and 339 (A. Păunescu); New York 2004, no.194, pp.321–2 (A. Păunescu); Bucharest 2004, no.15, p.85 (A. Păunescu); Năsturel 2005

It was probably the Bulgarian-born metropolitan of Suceava Theoktistos (d. 1478) who prompted Prince Stephen the Great (1457–1504) to endow the Bulgarian monastery of St George (called Zographou) on Mount Athos. In 1466 the Moldavian ruler granted the monastery an annuity and subsequently furnished it with a new hospital and refectory (Năsturel 1986, pp.183–93; Marinescu and Merzimekis 2004). Neither building stands today and many of Stephen's smaller gifts, for example two liturgical fans (New York 2004, no.69, pp.132–3) and an illuminated Gospel-book (Vienna 2003, no.VI.5, pp.362–7), are scattered abroad.

The Slavonic inscription on this textile suggests that it was made specially for a foundation dedicated to St George: 'O martyred and victorious great George, quick intercessor and kindly helper in troubles and misfortunes, unspeakable joys [*sic*] to people in sorrow, accept from us also this entreaty of your humble servant Lord John Stephen, by God's grace Prince of the Land of Moldavia. Preserve him from harm in this age and in the future through the prayers of those who venerate thee, so that we may glorify thee forever…' Originally, the embroidery must have been an ecclesiastic banner (labara) or a hanging (podea) beneath a painted icon in the main Zographou church (compare RBK, vol.5, cols 809–12). By 1898, the monks kept it in their pilgrim guestroom (archondarikion) and considered it the handiwork of Prince Stephen's daughter Helena (compare New York 2004, no.195, pp.322–3).

St George is usually depicted in East Christian art either standing or on horseback (Walter 2003, pp.123–34). Images of him enthroned are rare and must have originated in the Late Byzantine period (Philes 1855–57, no.266, vol.1, p.119). Several examples of this composition are known from Moldavia (Sabados 2004–05).

GEORGI R. PARPULOV

268

Mosaic panel of St Stephen

*c.*1108–13
Mosaic, gold, glass and stone tesserae on plaster, 233 × 134 × 11 cm
Inscribed: O A(ΓΙΟC) CTEΦ/ANOC (St Stephen)
St Sophia of Kiev, National Conservation Area
PROVENANCE: Cathedral of the Archangel Michael, Kiev; after 1934 in the Cathedral of St Sophia, Kiev
SELECTED REFERENCES: Lazarev 1966, pp.67–74; New York 1997, pp.289–92

St Stephen is shown dressed as a deacon in a white sticharion with gold collar and hem, and orarion over the left shoulder. He holds a gold and jewelled censer in his right hand; in his left hand, shielded by a red cloth, he holds a round box (pyxis). The background is gold, but he stands on a green ground with a strip of yellow above. Deacons, whose role is to assist priests in the liturgy, use censers to venerate Christ, the Mother of God and the saints depicted within the church and to expel evil spirits from the building. It has been suggested that the box Stephen holds contains bread for the Eucharist, as another job of deacons was to bring this to the altar. However, this would be a very unusual receptacle for Eucharistic bread, and it is also plausible that the box was an incense box used to replenish the censer.

The fragment is one of several salvaged from the Cathedral of St Michael of the Golden Domes in Kiev, which was destroyed in 1934. A few mosaic and fresco fragments were saved by experts from the Mosaic Section of the Academy of Sciences in Leningrad (St Petersburg) and these are now housed in the Cathedral of St Sophia, Kiev, and the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Other surviving fragments include, most spectacularly, the Communion of the Apostles, where Christ and accompanying angels offer bread and wine to the Apostles. The mosaic of Stephen himself was originally located on the north face of the south pier facing the sanctuary. In addition to his role in the liturgy, his depiction here may relate to his importance as the first martyr and to the supposed arrival in Rus' of the relic of his arm in the late eleventh or early twelfth century.

The Cathedral of St Michael was founded on 11 July 1108 by the Kievan prince Sviatopolk Iziaslavych and must have been completed before April 1113, when he was buried there. The title 'Golden Domes' suggests that no expense was spared in building and decorating the cathedral. The exterior domes were gilded; inside the church was filled with mosaic in the central apse and, probably, the central dome, while the walls were covered with frescoes.

LIZ JAMES

269

Fresco copy from the King's Church, Studenica monastery, with patrons and saints

1314 (copied by Svetislav Mandić, 20 January 1964)
Tempera on canvas, 218 × 180 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.no.704
SELECTED REFERENCES: Spatharakis 1976; Babić 1987; Radoj i 1997

This section of the fresco decoration of the south wall of a chapel dedicated to SS. Joachim and Anna, parents of the Virgin Mary, represents the sponsorship and endowment of the church by King Stefan Uroš II Milutin in honour of the Enthroned Christ. King Stefan, who was born in 1253 and ruled Serbia from 1282 to 1321, is shown with his fourth wife Queen Simonida, daughter of Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328). His marriage to this Byzantine princess in 1299 was a diplomatic success in pacifying the Balkans and tensions between Byzantium and Serbia as a result of his aggressive campaigns into disputed territories.

The imagery shows the appropriation of Byzantine models by the Serbian rulers: the king holds a model of the church, a formula often found in Byzantine church decorations, and both wear Byzantine-style royal vestments. An inscription identifies Simonida as 'Simonida, by God's mercy, queen of Komnina Palaiologina'. She is painted with a flat, oval face with high arched eyebrows and a small nose and mouth. This is a formula for conveying the idea of elegance and royalty in painted portraits of the twelfth century in Byzantium. This portrait of King Stefan Milutin is one of fourteen found in the Balkans and painted in his lifetime. The inscription reads: 'Stefan Uroš, by God's mercy, our king and autocrator of all Serbian lands and seas.' St Anna holds a small figure of the Virgin Mary.

BOJAN POPOVIĆ

270

Fresco copy from Sopoćani monastery with King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin, the Virgin and Child

Third quarter of the thirteenth century (copied by Časlav Colić, 20 December 1987)
Tempera on canvas, 138 × 350 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.no.1322
SELECTED REFERENCES: Spatharakis 1976; Djurić 1991; Radojčić 1997; Todić 2000; Todić 2006–07

This fresco decorated the grand mid-thirteenth-century Monastery of Sopoćani (which later became a cathedral). It was in the narthex on the east wall to the right of the main entrance door into the church. It represents the Serbian King Stefan Uroš I presenting his eldest son Stefan Dragutin to the Virgin enthroned with Christ. On the east part of the south wall of the narthex and so adjoining this panel were paintings of his wife Queen Helena and their second son, the future Stefan Uroš II Milutin.

Stefan Uroš I was the youngest son of Stefan and Anna, the daughter of Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice. He was King of Serbia from 1243 to 1276. His wife was either an Angevin princess or perhaps a daughter of a Latin emperor of Constantinople.

Stefan was ousted by his son Dragutin (1276–82), and died at Sopoćani in 1277. Dragutin ruled until 1282, when his brother Milutin became king (see cat.540). This portrait was made in happier times for Stefan, when he was grooming his elder son for the succession. Both wear Byzantine-style imperial robes and insignia.

BOJAN POPOVIĆ

271.1–4

Enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the Archangels Michael and Gabriel

Constantinople (?), second half of the eleventh century
Cloisonné enamel and gold, 5.9 × 5.5 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.8 × 5.3 cm; 5.3 × 5.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.nos 202, 201, 200, 203
PROVENANCE: monastery of Chilandari, Mount Athos
SELECTED REFERENCE: Nitić 2000

These enamel plaques are known to have decorated the sixteenth-century cover of the thirteenth-century manuscript of the Four Gospels of the Bulgarian King George Terter in the monastery of Chilandari on Mount Athos. The topmost gold sheet of each has been cut out to make a contour of the figure, while the lower embossed sheet makes a receptacle, in which strips form cells for the enamels. Most of the colours are opaque, but one green is transparent.

We do not know how many pieces formed the original set of enamels. Stylistically, comparison with the crown of Constantine IX Monomachos (1042–55) and the holy crown of Hungary (1074–77), both now in Budapest, reveals that they belong to the eleventh century (not later than

the 1070s). The paleography on the enamel plaques is similar to the inscriptions on the Hungarian crown. It may be assumed that the ornamental enamel was part of the original (incomplete) set.

Constantinople was the key place for the manufacture of such enamels. The pieces may have reached Chilandari as a gift from a Byzantine or Serbian ruler or church dignitary.

ALEKSANDRA NITIĆ AND ŽELJKA TEMERINSKI

272

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.5 cm; diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 309
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

273

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 3.1 cm; diameter 6.6 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 312
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

274

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, cast, wrought, filigree, granulation, height 2.4 cm; diameter 6.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 310
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

Large and embellished with filigree, these hinged bracelets are part of the Byzantine tradition and, together with diadems and earrings, were adopted very early on by the wives of rich landowners in Russia and Eastern and Southern Europe, but also, in a more modest form, by women generally as a form of personal adornment. Hinged bracelets are often decorated with the figures of animals, birds and plants. They recall the cloth bracelets often seen on the secular clothing in fresco paintings (Radojković 1966, pp.44–5); some examples embroidered with gold and pearls, which were worn with church vestments, have also been preserved in Serbia (Stojanović 1959, pp.67–9, figs 4, 5, 16, 18, 54).

The bracelets from Markova Varoš are distinguished by precise craftsmanship and are open and linked semicircular shapes, which offer various decorative possibilities. This dynamic impression is further enhanced by triangular groups of granules set into rows of circular segments. The fashion for bulky rounded shapes decorated with little cones of granules goes back to very early examples of Serbian goldsmiths' art, the most famous being the ring of King Stefan I (early thirteenth century) (Milošević 1990, pp.169–70, 171–2).

In addition to these three bracelets, two more of the same type were discovered at Markova Varoš; these have suffered varying degrees of damage. Four bore almost identical decoration, while the fifth (cat.274) is thinner by the width of the decorative border on the edge of the other bracelets.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

275

Bracelet

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver, cast, wrought, twisted, granulation, filigree, height 2.7 cm; width 8.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 314
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš near Prilep

This large elliptical bracelet has a central part composed of four wires twisted into a spiral whose ends meet and extend to form a trapezoid shape. The extended ends of this open bracelet are decorated with granules spaced at intervals and encircled with filigree wire.

Open bracelets are one of the earliest forms of jewellery for the hand. Excavations have revealed examples from the time when metal was first used (Garašanin 1983, p.745). In the Balkans this type of bracelet, also called belenzuk, followed on from the Late Greco-Roman open bracelet with broad ends bearing simple decoration or fashioned into the shape of a snake (Ćorović-Ljubinković 1977, p. 75). Moreover, this type of bracelet was frequently found on the territory settled by the east and south Slavs. The belenzuk, made of thick silver wire twisted into a spiral, became popular from the first half of the thirteenth century onwards in the Balkans (Milošević 1990, pp.172–3). The belenzuk open bracelet also passed into ethnic jewellery, except that the technique of twisting wire died out after the Middle Ages. In the Balkans between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, belenzuk bracelets became even larger and took on elements of oriental decoration (Ivanić 1995, pp. 101–2).

BRANKA IVANIĆ

276

Queen Theodora's ring

Serbia, before 1332
Gold, niello, height 2.9 cm; width 2.3 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 342
PROVENANCE: found in 1913 in the tomb of Queen Theodora, Banjska monastery
SELECTED REFERENCES: Novaković 1912; Radojković 1969b; Milošević 1990, no.77

This ring was cast as a single piece, with an engraved representation of a double-headed eagle on its head and a Cyrillic inscription on its shoulders (He who wears it may God help him). The ring has several different messages. The representation of the double-headed eagle, emblem of the royal house of Nemanjić, indicates the origin and status of the ring's owner, the wife of the Serbian king Stefan III Dečanski (1322–55) and mother of the most powerful Serbian ruler, Stefan IV Dušan (1331–55): STEFANUS, DEI GRATIA ROMANIE, SCLAVONIE ET ALBANIE (Novaković 1912, p.715). The motto of the inscription has a prophylactic purpose. The ring band is notched and the notches filled with niello divided into rhombs showing fantastic creatures and floral decoration in a Western style. This use of motifs, present not only in jewellery, but also in miniatures, stone sculptural decoration and architecture, reflects a style that was present simultaneously in Serbia and in Byzantium and the West.

The ring is probably the work of one of the Serbian goldsmith's workshops in Kosovo and Metohija, which produced a great number of rings with the same technical and stylistic features. The shape of the ring, the magical, prophylactic and symbolic character of the ornamentation, and the formula of the inscription point to a group of rings from Serbia and neighbouring countries that can be dated to a period lasting from the end of the thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth century (Radojković 1969b, pp.107–29; Milošević 1990, nos 82–8).

Queen Theodora (d. 1332) is buried in the church of Banjska monastery, the foundation and mausoleum of King Milutin (father of King Stefan Dečanski), during a period marked by the influence of Byzantium on political relations, spirituality and customs.

EMINA ZECEVIĆ

277

Ring

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century

Silver, cast, twisted, granulation, filigree, height 3 cm; width 2.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 318
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

The bezel of this ring is an inverted flat-topped cone. The surface is decorated with an eight-petalled rosette made of filigree wire. Each petal has a coil of filigree wire set into it. Granules set in the centre and at the edges of the bezel complete the ornamentation. The hoop of the ring consists of two thick wires and one filigree wire twisted together.

This ring reveals a sense of the synthesis and unity of style inherent in medieval costume. The twisted-wire technique links this ring to the belenzuk bracelets, while the filigree decoration on the bezel is found on both types of bracelet. The twisted-wire hoop is not common in medieval jewellery (Milošević 1990, p.80). As far as the filigree decoration is concerned, it is analogous with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century jewellery in the Balkan peninsula.

The entire find from Markova Varoš is unique in that it contains all the elements of the jewellery worn by the female aristocracy and hence completes our knowledge of what was worn by women in the ruling and landowning classes.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

278

Buckle of Prince Petar of Hum

Goldsmith's workshop in Split, 1220s
Gold, 5.1 × 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 225
PROVENANCE: Discovered by chance near Budimlje, Montenegro, 1881
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kovačević 1884, pp.110–18; Milošević 1987, pp. 178–9, Radojković 1969b, pp. 93–6, 107, pls XI–XIII

This buckle is heavy, circular in shape, with a rhomboid profile. Its catch is movable. On the outside edge of the front of the buckle an inscription is carved in two languages, Church Slavonic and Latin: +ZAPONY VELHEGA KNYZA XYLMSKOGA PETRA: PRETENDE COMIITI PET; the inside edge is decorated by a row of stylised leaves. On the inside edge of the back of the buckle there is an almost identical motif of stylised leaves, while the outside edge displays carved animals facing each other: birds, dogs, dragons and other monsters with tails that end in the shape of a palm. This style of embellishment was much used in Romanesque and Gothic sculpture and in illustrated manuscripts. To judge by the inscription, the buckle must have belonged to Petar, son of Prince Miroslav, who ruled over the Hum region. It is presumed that Petar was given this buckle upon being elected Prince of Split in 1222.

The excellent quality of the craftsmanship and the skilful combination of gold and niello places this buckle among the masterpieces of thirteenth-century goldsmiths' art.

SLOBODAN FIDANOVSKI

279

Dušan's cup

Serbia, 1345–55
Silver, gilded, cast, engraved, height 3.6 cm; diameter 18.6 cm; width with handle 20.8 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2001
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nikola, Drenova
SELECTED REFERENCES: New York 2004, no.20, p.48 (B. Ivanić; Radojković 1966, p.33; Radojković 1969b, p.116; Belgrade 1991, p.31 (M. Spremić); Šakota 1981, pp. 75–6

This shallow cup has a crescent handle. On the elevated base is a medallion with a heraldic double-headed eagle surrounded by a band bearing the inscription: + STEPANY C(a)RY Œ XRNSTE BLA(ro)VERYNI (Stephen, Emperor faithful in Christ). The engraved surface of the medallion resembles the texture of textile. It is possible that the Serbian insignia on textiles were used as the model. They are represented in documents, in a map dated 1339 by the Italian cartographer Angelino Dulcerte. The same double-headed eagle is present on the Serbian national flag.

The heritage of Byzantine art is reflected not only in the shape of the cup, but also in the abundant motifs of the tendril and acanthus leaves. As it was discovered in a wall cavity in the narthex of the Church of St Nikola, Drenova, Dušan's cup had belonged probably to the church treasury. This by no means excludes the possibility that, prior to the being donated to the church, it had belonged to a particular person.

The heraldic figure of the double-headed eagle and the inscription with the name of the emperor reveals that the cup was made especially for Dušan's court. Mention of the name Stjepan, instead of Stefan, indicates a possible Western influence. Historical sources record that Tsar Stefan Dušan ordered 33 silver cups from Venice (Radojković 1969b, p.116).

NATAŠA CEROVIĆ

280

Cup

Serbia, fifteenth century
Silver, gilt, cast, chased, punctuated, engraved, soldered, 5.6 × 15 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 2958
PROVENANCE: Dobri Dol, near Pirot
SELECTED REFERENCES: Tomić 1960–61; Radojković 1966, p.35; Šakota 1984, p.161

This deep calotte-shaped cup with its broad downward-curving rim, accentuated edges and flat bottom belongs to a type mentioned in church inventories.

The decoration consists of three alternating concentric bands. The figure of a deer on the bottom, with its head missing, is soldered onto a medallion with the fight between Samson and the lion. It alternates with a broader band of a double row of broken arches facing each other. Between the arches are ivy leaves and lilies. The broad rim is decorated with the same motifs. This combination of religious symbols of the deer, the lily and ivy with the Old Testament story is a familiar feature of Byzantine art.

The shape of the cup, and the treatment of the lily in combination with the Gothic arches, is influenced by Venetian craftsmanship. Artists in the workshops of Dubrovnik incorporated Western and Eastern forms in their products, which may be the provenance of this piece.

This cup, like others found in the hoard from Dobri Dol, together with the pieces of jewellery discovered there, helps to build a profile of art in Serbia.

NATAŠA CEROVIĆ

281

Royal doors with the Annunciation

Serbia, second half of the fourteenth century
Tempera (?) on wood, relief, woodcarving, 128 × 62.5 × 5.4 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 5445
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nicholas, Šilevo
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ćorović-Ljubinković 1969, pp.33–5, tabs IVb–VIa; Weitzmann et al. 1982, p.193

These are the central ('royal') doors from an unidentified iconostasis. They are divided into two parts – the larger showing the Annunciation, the smaller containing carved decoration – that are framed by a partially preserved, carved, polychromatic border with double interlacing over leather strips.

The figures of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin are executed in bas-relief, then painted, while the segment of heaven with cross-shaped ray which contains the dove of the Holy Spirit is painted. The two figures are elongated. Gabriel, whose arms are out of proportion to his body, is more voluminous than the figure of the Virgin. The painted surface has been damaged.

The iconography and style point to a local workshop around the middle or second half of the fourteenth century. These doors are known as the Andreaš doors, although there is no proof that they belonged to the Andreaš monastery (1388–89).

SANJA PAJIĆ AND SOFIJA KAJTEZ

282

Fragment of a reliquary

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Carved wood, chased silver, 4.4 × 3.3 × 0.9 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv. no. 317
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

Faith among the laity entailed the wearing of miniature icons round the neck. The most modest of these were made of wood. It was extremely important for the ruling class to demonstrate their piety, so the only neck decoration found in this hoard was a little pendant icon on which three holy warriors are represented. It was a widespread custom in Byzantium to decorate parts of the holy cross or reliquaries of saints in a sumptuous way. Transformed into jewellery, these reliquaries accompanied their owners at all times and thus ensured them protection.

It cannot be established whether this fragment was the front or back of the reliquary. There are examples with the Virgin on the front and the holy warriors on the back (W. Wixom in New York 1997, p.164). The preserved half of this rectangular reliquary depicts three saints, portrayed frontally: St Georgios (ΓΕ)ΩΡΓΙ(ΟC), St Demetrios, O ΔΗΜ(ΗΤΡΙΟC), and the third, probably one of the two saints Theodore, judging by the preserved part of the inscription Θ(ΕΟΔΩΡΟC). The saints are presented in full military dress. A similar reliquary was discovered

in another late medieval hoard in the village of Gorno Orizari.

The stylised portrayal of the holy warriors as lean, delicate figures of ascetic appearance recalls the figures of the late thirteenth century (Radojković 1966, p.15, note 15). The silver relief surface has been worn smooth and is tarnished in parts, which proves that this reliquary was in use for a long time. The precision and delicacy of the craftsmanship is notable.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

283

Earrings

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, gemstones, cast, faceted, hammered, filigree, 6.9 × 7.2 cm (setting); 4 × 7.4 cm (fragment)

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.no.308
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found at Markova Varoš, near Prilep

These fine earrings (one of which is a fragment) were designed to be affixed to a wreath or crown by a row of pearls or strips of expensive cloth, so that in fact they were completely unattached to the ears themselves. Some similar examples even retain an original band of filigree wire that was worn over the head to join the earrings and make it easier to wear heavy pieces of jewellery. Large earrings or ear decorations were an integral part of the jewellery worn by the wife of a ruler or rich landowner, according to both written and art sources (Radojković 1969b, p.140). They differ from the delicate, small earrings, sometimes made of gold, which were reserved for everyday wear.

The earrings from Markova Varoš consist of metal rings linked to the semicircular body of the earring, in which there is a filigree wire shaped like an eagle with outstretched wings. Around this central part there are flat-topped cones whose narrow ends join onto the central part from where they radiate outwards like the spokes of a wheel. The cones vary in size, and the alternative grouping of large and small cones matches the alternate use of filigree decoration at the base of the small cones and semi-precious coloured stones set into the base of the larger ones. Judging by their appearance, it is clear that the head ornament from the same hoard (cat.284) and the earrings are not part of a set.

These earrings belong to the 'Dragiževo' type, and many have been discovered all over Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and Greece. These relatively frequent finds are mirrored by a large number of representations in church frescoes in the same territories (Radojković 1966, pp.42–3). Current thinking dates the earliest appearance of this type of earring to the late thirteenth century (Milošević 1990, pp.159–60). These earrings long continued to be worn and after the demise of the Serbian landowning class, they became an item of formal jewellery in women's national folk costume (Radojković 1966, pp.248–9).

BRANKA IVANIČ

284

Head ornament

Serbia, first half of the fourteenth century
Silver-gilt, gemstones, beaten, filigree, semi-precious stones, length 23 cm; width 2 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.no.316
PROVENANCE: part of the hoard of jewellery found in Markova Varoš, near Prilep
SELECTED REFERENCE: Radojković 1966, pp.36–40

This head ornament, which was worn across the forehead, was described in texts as a garland or wreath (Radojković 1966, pp.36–40). This garland belongs to the relatively small number of head ornaments preserved in Eastern and Southern Europe. It formed part of the jewellery worn by women of all social groups, but this very costly example must have been worn by the wife of a ruler or rich landowner. As a head ornament, it makes up a set with earrings (see cat.283), which are found far more often. Numerous portraits show the garland as a fastening for a headscarf (Milošević 1990, p.177). These ornaments can be made of metal, with or without precious or semi-precious stones, or of fine cloth embroidered with gold or silver thread and pearls (Ercegović-Pavlović 1975, pp.279–83).

The garland consists of eight rectangular plates joined together by hinges. The end plates each have a metal ring that acts as a fastener. A multi-coloured semi-precious stone is set into each plate. There is filigree floral decoration around the setting of each stone.

In style, the wreath resembles the rest of the jewellery found at Markova Varoš. As is frequently the case with Serbian medieval art, the general appearance and shape of the objects were taken from the Orient, but they were fashioned in the specific style of some Western artwork; such a combination is evident in all the items of jewellery found there. There are clear analogies between this ornament, reminiscent in style of the thirteenth-century Hungarian crown jewels (Milošević 1990, p.177), and art objects fashioned by Serbian goldsmiths from an earlier period (Radojković 1969b, pp.89–90), which testifies to the constant blending of different cultures in the Balkan peninsula.

BRANKA IVANIĆ

285

Stone khatchkar of Aputayli

Noraduz cemetery in Sewan, near Lake Sevan, northern Armenia, 1225
Tufa (stone), 175 × 100 × 31 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, P&E 1977, 5-5. 1
SELECTED REFERENCES: Azarian 1973, pl.168 (showing the khatchkar before its removal from Noraduz); London 1978, no.110, pl.19; West 1980; London 2001, no.14

Khatchkars (simply an Armenian word meaning 'stone cross') are an important feature of the Armenian landscape. They can be found in their thousands throughout the country, and in a variety of settings: in graveyards, incorporated into the walls of churches and carved into cliffs. They appear from the ninth century on (an evolution of earlier steles in both form and function) and served a variety of purposes, usually concerned with commemoration (Donabédian 2007; Azarian 1970). Most, as this example, were tomb-markers that were placed facing west at the foot of the burial, so that the cross would be the first thing seen by the dead person as he or she rose at the Second Coming. Others were commissioned to commemorate the completion of buildings and bridges, to celebrate military victories or to mark the fulfilment of vows.

This khatchkar was created as a memorial. It was designed to stand over a tomb in Noraduz cemetery, near Lake Sevan in the north of Armenia, and is dated by an inscription down its left edge to the year 1225: 'In 674 of the Armenian era. God have mercy on Aputayli. Amen.' Aputayli is otherwise unattested. The khatchkar is typical of its period in terms of its design: carved of a dark tufa stone, it is rectangular in shape with a slight overhang at the top. Its decoration is dominated by the central cross, in this case arising from palmettes (and so, perhaps, alluding to the cross as the Tree of Life). It is supplemented by secondary crosses below and to the left, and is framed by a series of interlaced patterns. In the course of the thirteenth century, khatchkars were to become more intricate and elaborate, incorporating more figurative imagery. At the same time the decorative patterns were to become more and more influenced by Islamic motifs.

ANTONY EASTMOND

286

Paten (diskos) with scenes of the Passion of Christ

Central Asia, ninth or tenth century
Gilded, cast, chased and incised silver, diameter 23 cm

State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, inv.no.ω 154
PROVENANCE: found near the village of Grigorovskoye, Solikamsk Uezd, region of Perm, 1897
SELECTED REFERENCES: Khvolson, Pokrovskii and Smirnov 1899; St Petersburg 1998, pp.194–5 (B. Marshak)

A paten is a special dish used in the liturgy to hold the bread of the Eucharist. Three scenes fill the three entwined medallions: the Ascension (top), the Holy Women at the tomb (left) and the Crucifixion (right). At the bottom can be seen Daniel in the Lions' Den; on the left are two kneeling soldiers, keepers of the tomb; to the right is the Denial of Peter. At the centre is a cross. The scenes are identified by inscriptions in Syriac in the 'estrangela' script, the form used for sacred writings (clockwise from the top): 'the Ascension of Christ'; 'Simon-Peter denying Christ three times before the cock crows'; 'the Crucifixion of Christ', with on the left 'the thief whose sins Christ forgave' and on the right, 'the thief on his left'; over the image of the left lion, 'Daniel'; on the image of the two Holy Women, 'Mary Magdalene, Mary', over the angel, 'the Angel', and in the tomb, 'the Anastasis'; and 'the soldiers guarding the tomb'.

One feature of the iconography of the Ascension as it is shown here is distinctive: Mary is not represented at the centre of the twelve Apostles, as is usual in Byzantine art, although she is shown at the empty tomb. This significant omission has been used to argue that this paten was made for an Assyrian church of the East, which used the Nestorian liturgy. The Nestorians (who followed the theology of Nestorios, which was condemned as heresy at the Council of Chalcedon in 451) split from the Orthodox church of Constantinople in the fifth century over the issue of the status of Mary as a mother. They rejected the idea that she was Theotokos, and saw her as Christotokos, believing that Christ took his human nature from Mary, but that the divine logos existed before the incarnation. The emphasis on the exaltation of the Cross might refer to Nestorian knowledge of the Apocryphal Gospel of St Peter (x, 35–42).

The style and treatment of the subjects have several connections with Early Byzantine works from the region of Syria and Palestine (such as the ampullae from the Holy Land). But the garments and mandorla of Christ in the Ascension point to a production in Central Asia in the ninth or tenth century, and perhaps to the region of Semirechye, the south-eastern part of modern Kazakhstan. Odd mistakes in the inscriptions suggest that perhaps the Syriac language was not the native tongue of the artist.

VERA ZALESSKAYA

287

Gospels with Tsar Ivan Alexander, folio 272*v*

Turnovo, 1355–56
Tempera and gold on parchment, 35.5 × 25 cm

The British Library, London, Add. Ms. 39627
PROVENANCE: by the seventeenth century at the Monastery of St Paul on Mount Athos; acquired by Robert Curzon in August 1837; donated to the British Library, London, in 1917
SELECTED REFERENCES: Dimitrova 1994; New York 2004, no.27, pp.56–57 (S. McKendrick)

These four Gospels written in Bulgarised Church Slavonic by a scribe, Simeon, are a tour de force of the grand illuminated book. The manuscript opens with a striking double-page portrait of the Tsar Ivan Alexander with his wife, two sons, three daughters and one son-in-law. It has 286 folios with 366 narrative miniatures illustrating each of the Gospels in turn in frieze format. It also has five further representations of the Tsar at the end of each of the Gospels (folios 272*v* and 134*v* are example of these images).

The manuscript was probably produced at Turnovo, the capital of the Second Bulgarian Empire ruled by Ivan Alexander from 1331 until his death in 1371. The manuscript declares visually both the rivalry that Ivan Alexander felt towards Byzantium, and also a period of greater friendship after 1355 when John VI Kantakouzenos was forced to abdicate and John V Palaiologos became the Byzantine emperor. This co-operation was marked by the marriage of one of Ivan's daughters to the future emperor Andronikos IV Palaiologos. The imagery implies that Ivan Alexander's dynasty was as powerful as the emperors of Constantinople (in fact the Bulgarian empire fell to the Ottomans in 1396), and his title emulated Byzantium with its terminology – 'In Christ God faithful Emperor and Autocrat of all Bulgarians'. The manuscript achieves his ambitions to be 'more Byzantine than the Byzantines' through its luxury, style, with a lavish use of gold leaf, and contents. It must have copied an eleventh-century model produced at the Monastery of St John Stoudios at Constantinople in the same distinctive style as the Theodore Psalter of 1066 (cat.51). The artists presumably had a Gospel-book equivalent to this psalter (one exists in Paris [Bibliothèque nationale, cod.gr. 74]). They changed the imagery of their model so that it promoted not the abbot but a Bulgarian king. The artists faithfully re-created the exquisite style and standards of this monastery with its famous scriptorium for its Bulgarian fourteenth-century audience.

ROBIN CORMACK

288

Fragments of the robe of Tsar Ivan Alexander

Byzantium, 1331–71
Silk-based textile embroidered with silver-gilt, silver and silk threads, 8.5 × 49 cm; 8.5 × 48 cm; 8 × 46.5 cm

National Museum, Belgrade, inv.no.5844
PROVENANCE: Church of St Nicholas, Staničenje, near Pirot
SELECTED REFERENCE: Nitic and Temerinski 2006

These fragments of gold-embroidered textile, discovered in tomb 15 in the Church of St Nicholas, Staničenje, near Pirot (1331–32), are preserved in the form of strips. On five strips there are repeated motifs in tendrils: a deer, a double-headed eagle, a crane and tablets with the name and title of the Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Alexander (1331–71). The sixth strip bears the motif of an arcade with double-headed eagles above. The inscriptions date the robe to the reign of Ivan Alexander. The nobleman buried in the tomb was probably given the robe by Ivan Alexander.

The embroidery worked in silver-gilt and silver wire is surface-couched on ochre silk. The style of the gold embroidery shows the influence of Italian silk. Silks from Venice were very popular in late Byzantium. The gold-embroidery programme is imperial in its iconography of double-headed eagles.

The robe, probably tight and knee-length, was buttoned from the neck to the thighs with ball-shaped silver-gilt buttons. The gold embroidery was placed alongside the buttoning. The robe was probably made in a Byzantine workshop.

ALEKSANDRA NITIC AND ŽELJKA TEMERINSKI

289

The Vani Gospels, folio 3*v*

Constantinople, *c.*1200
Manuscript, 28.5 × 19.5 cm; 247 folios

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, A1335
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov and Bakradze 1890, no.42, pp.47–50; Taq'aishvili 1935; Sharashidze 1954, pp.407–10; Amiranashvili 1963, pp.232–3; Amiranashvili 1966, pls 30–3; Beridze et al. 1984, pp.131, 132, 138

The Vani Gospels, written in the Georgian *nuskhuri* script, show the continuing close relationship between Georgia and Byzantium around the year 1200. The creation of the manuscript is recorded in two brief colophons, both written in gold, on folio 272*v*. One, in Georgian, states that the text was written in the city of Constantinople by a monk called Iovane, who calls himself 'the unworthy and wretched confessor of the Saint Queen Tamar'. The second, in Greek, states that it was illuminated by the chrysographer Michael Koresis. Another colophon on folio 266*v* is concerned to demonstrate the accuracy of the translation from Greek into Georgian. It says that the text was copied from a manuscript of the Gospels held at the Hromana monastery near Constantinople (the main centre of Georgian monasticism in the region), which in turn copied the autograph translation made by St Giorgi the Athonite. This was kept at the Iviron monastery on Mount Athos, where this great Georgian translator had worked. This interest in the historical accuracy of the text is at odds with the images that accompany it: these reflect the most modern interests in Byzantine Gospel illumination. After a prologue showing Christ blessing the four Evangelists, each Gospel is preceded by an author-portrait accompanied by a scene from the Life of Christ (Matthew is paired with the Nativity; Mark with the Baptism; Luke with the Annunciation; John with the Anastasis). This follows a liturgical model established in Constantinople at the start of the century (Meredith 1966). The canon tables at the start of the text are also gloriously enlivened by colourful headpieces, replete with figures, birds, animals and plants, and personifications of the months.

The scribe tells us that he was confessor to Queen Tamar of Georgia (1184–1210). Her rule is associated with the greatest efflorescence of Georgian culture and power; she was celebrated in her lifetime in art and poetry, and subsequently came to lie at the heart of much Georgian national folklore. The reference to her in the colophon as a saint indicates that this

sanctification of the queen began during her lifetime (Eastmond 1998, pp.93–184).

The Gospels were once housed in a magnificent fourteenth-century metalwork case, which was fortunately photographed before it was stolen and destroyed during the Russian Revolution (Taq'aishvili 1935, pls 41–4).

ANTONY EASTMOND

290

Covers of the Tsqarostavi Gospels

Tao-Klarjeti (south-west Georgia), 1195
Manuscript with silver-gilt covers, 24.5 × 16.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-907
SELECTED REFERENCES: Kondakov and Bakradze 1890, no. 59, pp. 43–4; Abuladze 1958, pp. 322–7; Chubinashvili 1959, pp. 570–1; Amiranashvili 1964, Machavariani 1970, pl. 48; Baltimore 1999, no. 127 (E. Machavariani)

Georgia excelled at the production of repoussé metalwork throughout the Middle Ages, and preserves large numbers of icons and other objects made in this technique. The covers of the Tsqarostavi Gospels are one of the outstanding examples from the late twelfth century. They were made by the goldsmith Beka Opizari. The front cover shows the Crucifixion, with Christ between his mother and St John the Evangelist. The back shows the Deisis, with Christ now enthroned, while Mary and St John the Baptist intercede on behalf of humankind. The image of intercession is matched by the three inscriptions around it, which call for salvation for those involved in the commissioning and creation of the covers. The two formal texts written in *asomtavruli* script enframed above and below Christ name the commissioner Ioane Mtbevari (Bishop of Tbeti); the one squeezed alongside the throne of Christ names the artist: 'Christ, have mercy on the goldsmith Beka Opizari' (Amiranashvili 1964, p.7).

Beka Opizari is the most famous of Georgia's medieval goldsmiths, along with his contemporary (and possibly teacher) Beshken Opizari, whose covers for the Berta Gospels (National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-906) seem to have been the immediate model for this set of covers. He is also recorded as producing the covers of the Anchi gospels (now lost) and the frame of the Anchiskhati, the miraculous icon of Christ at Anchi (which survives in the State Museum of Fine Arts, Tbilisi). This was commissioned by its bishop, Ioane Rkinaeli, and paid for by Queen Tamar (1184–1210).

The manuscript itself was copied out in 1195 by two scribes, Ioane Pukaralisdze and Giorgi Setaisdze, whose names are recorded in a colophon. A further colophon on folio 273*r* records the commissioning of the covers: 'the covers of these gospels contain silver worth 200 drama, and gold and pearls and precious stones worth 20 drama. The wage of the silversmith was 23 drama' (Abuladze 1958, p.324).

ANTONY EASTMOND

291

Covers of the Tbeti Gospels

Shavsheti (south-west Georgia), late twelfth century
Manuscript with silver gilt covers, 26.7 × 19.5 cm

National Centre of Manuscripts, Tbilisi, Q-909
SELECTED REFERENCES: Materialy po arkheologii kavkaza 1909, pp. 131–62; Macalevic 1923, pp. 92–3; Abuladze 1958, pp. 333–8; Chubinashvili 1959, pp. 570–1; Amiranashvili 1964, pp. 26, 27, 38–40

The covers of the Tbeti Gospels are a second commission of the bishop of Tbeti, Ioane. Like the Tsqarostavi Gospels (cat. 290) and the Berta Gospels, the front cover shows the Crucifixion, with Christ on the Cross being mourned by Mary and John the Evangelist and two angels. The Georgian uncial inscription over Christ's head reads 'Jesus Christ, king of the Jews'. The back cover, however, has a different iconography: it shows Christ handing the keys of Heaven to St Peter and a book to St Paul. The two Apostles raise their hands to Christ to acknowledge his dominion. Squeezed between them is a sixteen-line inscription in Georgian *asomtavruli* script that reads: 'The ones [i.e. the Apostles Peter and Paul] whom the Teacher [i.e. Christ] ordered to be seated at the thrones at the day of Judgement, [may you] intercede for me, Ioane Mtbevari-Sapareli, pitiful of soul. Amen.'

Despite its poor condition, the delicacy of the craftsmanship is evident in the finely wrought figures, the decorative script used for the inscriptions and the elegant vegetal scroll motif that runs around the frame. Together, the two book covers underline the importance that Georgians placed on the suitable adornment of the New Testament: the Word of God. The quality and style of the metalwork is closely linked with that of the Tsqarostavi Gospels, although there is disagreement about whether it can be linked with Beka Opizari himself.

SS. Peter and Paul are also invoked in the main colophon in the manuscript, which had been commissioned by an earlier bishop of Tbeti, Pavle. This colophon dates the manuscript as it also refers to the Georgian capture in 1161 of Ani, the old capital of Armenia. It was taken in that year by the army of King Giorgi III (1156–84) from the Muslim Shaddadid emirs that had bought the city from its Seljuq conquerors in 1087 in return for a group of golden icons (Thomson 1989, p.195).

ANTONY EASTMOND

292

Four Gospels with Christ, donor and scribe, folio 13 verso

Produced in 1342 at the Monastery of Drazark in Cilicia during the prelacy of Ter Mkhitar, and Ter Basilios, at the request of the priest Tiratsu, and illuminated by Sargis Pidsak
Parchment, written in regular *bolorgir* script in black ink; 20.5 × 14.5 cm; 350 folios

On loan from the Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Arm. MS 614
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1958, no. 614, pp. 181–4, pl. 21; Ghazaryan 1980; Der Nersessian 1993

The frontispiece, with Christ blessing the donor and the scribe, is striking. In the manuscripts of an earlier period Armenian artists had usually represented only the donor in a prominent position. But, in the fourteenth century, painters' portraits begin to appear frequently. Three self-portraits of Sargis Pidsak (1290–1355) have survived. The first appears in the Gospel of Venice (Venice MS 97/16, AD 1331), where he represents himself kneeling at the feet of Matthew. Here Sargis Pidsak has a black thick beard and looks like a man in his thirties, but in his next portrait, painted in 1338, he gives the impression of a middle-aged person (Erevan Mat. MS 2627) and in this manuscript, painted in 1342, he is already an elderly man with a white beard. These changes in his personal appearance clearly indicate that Sargis Pidsak tried each time to give a faithful image, and these miniatures are important examples of the art of portraiture in the fourteenth century.

Portraits of scribes and artists are rare in Byzantine manuscripts but occur frequently in Armenian ones. This is in keeping with the Armenian practice of recording the scribes and painters in the colophon in order that their names might be recalled and prayers said for them by all present and future readers. Their portraits are an additional means of perpetuating their memory.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

293

The Armenian Psalter of King Levon III

Sis, the capital of the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, 1283. Illuminated by Sargis Pidsak
Vellum; written in *bolorgir* script, 24 × 17.5 cm; 259 folios

The British Library, London, Or 13804
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hapeshian 1922; Sotheby's 1977, lot 175 (V. Nersessian); London 2001, no.142

In this Psalter of King Levon III (1269–89) the Virgin is seated on a throne, with the Christ Child, here portrayed more as an adolescent, on her lap. Both raise their hands in blessing. Legends in white uncials on a blue background above each figure read 'Mother of God' (MAYR A[stoudso]Y) and 'Jesus Christ' (Y[isou]S K'[risto]S). An angel in the top left corner offers a kerchief. In the lower left corner a lay figure, expensively robed, kneels and extends his hands in prayer; the legend in white uncials above him reads 'Mother of God. Baron Hanes, Chancellor relies on thee'. Looking straight ahead with her right hand extended, she blesses Chancellor Hanes (Hovhannes = Joannis).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

294

STEP'ANOS VAHKATSI (1230–95)
Breviary of King Levon III of Cilician Armenia, folio 10*r*

Sis, the capital city of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia (?), 1269–89
Copied for King Levon III (1269–89), son of Het'um (1226–1269)
Parchment, written in *bolorgir* script, 16.5 × 13 cm; 190 folios

The British Library, London, Or 13993
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sowrmelian 1956, no. 23, pp. 36–42; Sotheby's 1977, lot 177 (V. Nersessian); Narkiss 1980, figs 72–83, pp. 63–74; Der Nersessian 1993, pp. 156–7, fig. 642; London 2001, no. 139, pp. 206–7; London 2007, no. 176

St Nerses IV Klayetsi, called *Shnorhali*, i.e. 'the Gracious' (1102–1173), catholicos of All Armenians (1166–1173), praying, is figured in the frontispiece, before his prayer for the twenty-four hours, while the king's portrait faces St Nerses's 'In faith I confess' profession of faith on the Holy Trinity. The prayer ends with a special plea for the king: 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Trinity and one indivisible Godhead, fortify Levon, King of All Armenians, crowned by Christ, together with his children, against the enemies of the cross of Christ, our God.' By depicting the chalice with the Christ Child (Greek: *amnos* or *melismos*), the artist is emphasising the real presence of Christ at the most sacred moment of the Eucharist. Standing behind the king and holding his crown is Baron Vasak who held the title of coronant (*t'agapah*). The features of the crown-bearer accord very closely with those of Baron Vasak represented on the thirteenth-century loose leaf in the Adolphe Stoclet collection and in the Gospels sponsored by Vasak (Jerusalem, St James MS no. 2568, *c.*1270). The artistic licence taken in allowing the figure of Vasak to break through the frame is characteristic also of the artist of these latter Gospels. The portrait of King Levon closely corresponds to that in the Queen Keran Gospels of 1271–73 (Jerusalem, St James, MS no. 2563; Narkiss 1980, figs 77–83).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

295

Four Gospels with a serpent curled around a trunk, folio 218*r*

Sis in the Kingdom of Armenian Cilicia, 1217
Oriental paper, 25.9 × 19 cm; 286 folios,

The Syndics of Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 2620
SELECTED REFERENCES: Casey 1939; Omont 1908, vol. 2, pl. 148; Nersessian forthcoming

The four Gospels are written in classical Armenian in *bolorgir* script in 1217 by the scribe Yohannes, pupil of 'Grigor the incomparable scribe'. The work was done in Sis in the cathedral dedicated to St Marine for the 'most worthy and holy *vardapet* Vardan'. The serpent coiled around a trunk on fol. 224*a* is an example of how this manuscript illumination works, with motifs related to the text instead of full-page miniatures: a ciborium crowned with a cross represents the temple of Jerusalem whose destruction is prophesised (Luke XXI, 5); a double cross raised above two cornucopia recalls the Crucifixion (John XIX, 17–20); a fish in a chalice appears alongside the account of Christ's breakfast when he revealed himself to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias (John XXI, 15). The reference to the serpent is that Yohannes has transformed into a genre scene the literal interpretation of the accompanying text (John III, 14): 'as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up'; he has represented a serpent coiled around the trunk of a tree and attacking the small birds in their nest. The image recalls the Byzantine Gospels of Paris (gr. 74), in which Christ points to the serpent raised on a column.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

296

T'OROS ROSLIN (fl.1256–68), possibly with a collaborator or assistant

Gospel-book of T'oros the Priest, folio 109*v*

1262, with seventeenth-century binding
Ink, paint and gold on parchment, 29.5 × 22 cm (20 × 13.6 cm), 410 folios + 2 flyleaves, one at the beginning and one at the end, each from earlier manuscripts

The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W.539
PROVENANCE: copied at Hromklay by T'oros Roslin in 1262 for the priest T'oros, nephew of Catholicos Constantine I (1221–67); presented by the priest T'oros to Ark'akaghin hermitage in 1266; by 1604, the manuscript was at the Monastery of the Holy Cross, Sebastia, where it stayed until the monastery was destroyed in 1914; purchased by Henry Walters from Dikran Kelekian, Paris, 1929; the manuscript passed to Mrs Sarah Walters at her husband's death, and was given by her to the Walters Art Gallery (now the Walters Art Museum); in 1935
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1993, pp. 51–76; Evans 1994, pp. 72–8; New York 1994, no. 8, pp. 149, 150 (H. Evans); London 2001, no. 159, pp. 225, 226 (V. Nersessian)

T'oros Roslin is the best-known Armenian painter of the medieval period, and was the most important scribe and illuminator working at Hromklay in the third quarter of the thirteenth century. Most of the ten books attributed to him were made for the Catholicos himself, and this one was made for T'oros the priest, the nephew of the Catholicos. Roslin is noted for his expansion of pictorial narrative, with miniatures of various sizes interspersed throughout the text and the margins, and this is the most densely illuminated of his works. Although Roslin is rightly recognised as an innovative illuminator, he was building on earlier traditions; in this manuscript his dependence on his teacher Yovhannes, and, ultimately, on innovations made at the scriptorium at Skewray half a century earlier, can be seen in the arrangement of the canon tables, the inclusion of the Evangelists' animal symbols at the Gospel openings and depictions of the Lamb of God (fols 14*r*, 321*r*).

Crusaders and mendicant friars arriving in Cilicia in the thirteenth century brought new pictorial forms, and while Armenian illumination continued to be closely tied to the Byzantine tradition, Western contact left its mark in a number of details. In the Last Judgement miniature (fol. 109*v*), the overall appearance of the scene, with the river of fire dividing the composition in two, is typically Byzantine, but the depiction of the foolish virgins, outside the left frame and unable to enter Paradise, was a popular motif in contemporary French painting. The Return of the Magi (fol. 19*r*) is iconographically unusual in the military retinue accompanying the Magi, but similar mounted soldiers, the brightly coloured legs of their horses overlapping in rhythmic patterns, were commonly depicted in French manuscripts of the period, such as the Morgan Picture Bible (Morgan Library, New York, MS M.638).

KATHRYN GERRY

297

Manuscript with donor before the Madonna della Misericordia

Sis, Cilicia, 1274

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1998 with the help of the Fellows Acquisition Fund; the Institute de Recherche sur les Miniatures Arméno Byzantines; the Manoogian Simone Foundation; the L.W. Frohlich Charitable Trust, in memory of L. W. Frohlich and Thomas R. Burns, in recognition of their interest in and contributions to the arts of the written word; the Hagop Kevorkian Fund, Kalousti P. and Emma Sogosian; Antranig and Varsenne Sarkissian; and an anonymous donor, in memory of Sirarpie Der Nersessian. Acc. no. MS M.1111
PROVENANCE: In 1956 in Brussels, Feron-Stoclet Collection; purchased by the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1998
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1970; Der Nersessian 1993, pp. 158–9, fig. 646; Mathews 1998, pp. 168–70, fig. 78; Mertan 1998–2000; Evans 2001, pp. 251–2, fig. 15.5; Derbes and Nef 2004, p. 466; New York 2004a, no. 30 B, pp. 60–1 (H. C. Evans); Marseilles 2007, no. 3.18, p. 93 (C. Mutafian and A. Ouzounian)

Formerly known as the Feron-Stoclet leaf, this folio with the donor's portrait was purchased by the Pierpont Morgan Library in 1998 to join the Marshal Oshin's Gospels from which it was taken (cat. 298). The partly preserved inscription, which matches the data from the colophon of the latter, enabled this attribution by Sirarpie Der Nersessian (1970) and is generally accepted. The leaf shows the Enthroned Virgin with the Christ Child spreading her mantle to shelter Oshin and his children kneeling before her. The bishop, whose elongated figure stands out in the background, introduces the donor; his nimbus and garment, ornamented with French-borrowed fleur-de-lis, point to a royal origin and enable him to be identified as Archbishop John, half-brother of Het'um I and the uncle of King Leo II.

The composition shares some iconographic features with the portrait of Prince Vasak with his children (Armenian Patriarchate, Jerusalem, MS 2568, fol. 328), in which the Madonna della Misericordia leads the kneeling donors towards the Enthroned Pantokrator. These two manuscripts produced by the same workshop at the same time raise the question of the introduction of the Madonna della Misericordia in the Christian East, as they offer the earliest dated examples and are among the earliest pieces of evidence for this iconographic type of the Virgin, preceding even the Madonna of the Franciscans painted by Duccio around 1280.

The Madonna della Misericordia originated in Italy in the first half of the thirteenth century and was quickly appropriated by the mendicant orders who brought this iconography to the Eastern Mediterranean, as indicated by the Carmelite's Virgin form St Cassianos in Cyprus. Rather than a specific connection between the Madonna della Misericordia and the Franciscans (Evans 2001, p.251), this iconography seems to have had a significant impact among Christians of different confessions in Cyprus and Cilicia (Carr 1995b, p.348). The frequent representation of that iconography of the Virgin in headpieces of legal documents, mainly in charters of confraternities (Vignola 1999), suggests that the formula efficiently expressed collective piety.

IOANNA RAPTI

298

Marshal Oshin's Gospels

Sis, Cilicia, 1274
Parchment, 29 × 21.2 cm; 320 folios

The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Purchased in 1928, acc. no.ms m.740
PROVENANCE: bought by Father T. Balian in Cesarea, Cappadocia, 1890; sold in 1920, purchased by J. P Morgan from Mrs J. D. Rockefeller, Jr., 1928
SELECTED REFERENCES: Der Nersessian 1970; Sanjian 1976, pp.582–96; Der Nersessian 1993, vol.1, pp.93, 102–3, 105–6, 124, vol.2, figs 412, 504–5, 507; Mathews 1998, pp.168–70, fig.78; Sousek 1998, pp.116–19, fig.36; Menan 1998–2000; New York 1994, no.64, pp.193–4, pl.15 (H. C. Evans); New York 2004, no.30a, pp.60–1 (H. C. Evans); Marseilles 2007, no.2.14, p.58 (C. Mutafian)

Although preserved in good condition, this manuscript has suffered losses, especially from the initial quire of the canon tables and its portraits of the Evangelists. It contains the letter of Eusebios (fols 1v–2), a pair of canon tables (fols 4r–5), the dedicatory pages (fols 6v–7), the portrait of John dictating to Prochoros (fols 6v–7) and a series of ornate letters introducing the readings throughout the book. This is one of the most lavish works to have been produced by a scriptorium related to the court of the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, which developed after the accession of King Leo II (1270–89); unlike most of the manuscripts of this group, Marshal Oshin's Gospel-book is dated by the scribal colophon which states that it was produced in the capital Sis.

Oshin, whose title reflects the use of Frankish terms among Armenian aristocracy, was the uncle of Leo's wife, Queen Keran. Oshin's Gospels present close connections with those ordered by Queen Keran in 1272 (Jerusalem, Armenian Patriarchate, MS 2563). The scribe Konstandin is most probably the same, while the illuminations of both manuscripts share a taste for de luxe gilded ornaments and brilliant enamelled-like colours.

The dedicatory pages record, like a colophon, the prayer for the memory of the donor and his relatives, alive and dead: the text is magnified by its metrical composition as well as by the monumental display within symmetrical architectural settings. Such dedicatory pages, displayed at the end of the preliminary quire after the model of the canon tables are a feature of Cilician aristocratic manuscripts, first experienced in the scriptorium of Hromkla on the Euphrates, the See of the Armenian Catholicos. The decoration of Oshin's dedicatory pages is characteristic of the courtly elegance of the manuscript and the visual syncretism of the workshop: in addition to traditional spandrels, birds and fighting beasts, the polylobed arch, probably of Islamic origin (Sousek 1998), houses a double-bodied harpy, who may come from Romanesque sculpture (Leclercq-Marx 1997, p.202).

IOANNA RAPTI

299

Four Gospels with the Virgin and Child and donor and Mary Magdalene, folio 257

Village of Shikbak in the region of Tayk, in the Church of St Sargis, 8 September 1313
Paper, written in large *bolorgir* script; 259 folios; 32 × 23 cm

The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, inv. no. Arm. 10
SELECTED REFERENCES: Talbot-Rice 1960–61; Der Nersessian 1973; Arutjunova-Fidanyan 1991; Ledov 1994; Vyronis 1957; London 2001, pp.223–4; London 2007, no.110, p.127

The scribe, Yovhannes the priest, states that he completed the copying of his manuscript on 8 September 1313 during the reign of King Oshin (1307–20) and seeks prayers for the sponsor of the manuscript, Lady T'amam khathoun, whose portrait is on folio 9a, standing next to the Enthroned Virgin Mary and accompanied by Mary Magdalene. The inscription above her head contains her name and the legend next to her shoulder states 'she [had] this Gospel made'.

Some time between 1313 and 1517, the manuscript was 'rescued from captivity for 10 florins by the Armeno-Georgian aristocratic family of the Vikhikatsi of the Bagradit dynasty, who at the end of the tenth century had settled in Tayk (modern Erzerum). The Armenian and the Georgian churches did not endorse the decision of the Council of Chalcedon in 451. In 608 or 609 the Armenian Church broke with the Georgian Church and excommunicated the formerly Miaphysite Catholicos Koriwn I, for his adoption of the Chalcedonian doctrine. The overwhelming majority of Armenians entering imperial society, primarily in the tenth to twelfth centuries, when they formed a significant portion of the ruling class, had adopted the Chalcedonian profession of faith. However, although they had adopted the Greek faith, there were some among them who retained their ethnic memory and continued to use Armenian as their language and support their ethnic heritage among them 'leaving aside as self-evident the cases emperors (Leo V, Romanos I, Lekapenos, John I Tzimiskes, or Basil I) or imperial ecclesiastical figures Michael II, Kourkouas Oxeitas (1143–46), and individuals like Eustathios Boilas (1059) and *Protos* of the Grand Lavra Theoktistos (1035) and Gregory Pakourianos (1086)' (Vryonis 1957).

The unique features of this exceptional manuscript are that the entire text of the Gospels is in classical Armenian, the illuminations have inscriptions in Georgian, and the saints depicted in the miniatures are those representing the Church before the schism of 451.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

300

Miniature with St Luke and Theophilos, folio 3r

Monastery of Grner (?), Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, thirteenth century
Parchment, 26 × 17 cm

Lent by the Syndics of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, McClean MS 201 3a
SELECTED REFERENCES: James 1912; Kurz 1964, London 2001, no.120, pp.190–1

St Luke is seated with his right hand stretched to receive the letter inscribed with the words 'And behold! Jesus commandeth'. He holds his Gospel between the folds of his cloak and feet resting on a stool studded with precious stones. The initial words of the Gospel just visible are inscribed on the open codex in two columns and his name 'Sourb Ghoukas' above his head in large capital letters. The contrasting costumes worn by the two principal figures emphasise their different social status. St Luke is wearing a simple cloak and sandals, while 'the most excellent Theophilos' (St Luke I, 2) wears a red mantle with hems studded with jewels, crimson shoes and stockings and accompanied by a servant. In accordance with the Armenian Synaxary 'St Luke wrote the Holy Gospel, which is called after him, for a Roman prince named Theophilos'. Similar imagery is found in the following Armenian manuscripts: Jerusalem Nr. 2563 (dated 1272); Erevan, Mat. Mss Nrs. 9422 (thirteenth century) and Nr.7742 (dated 1347).

'The miniature is so purely Byzantine in style, that one could easily believe it to be the work of a Greek artist, were it not for the inscription in Armenian. The deep colours, and the way the bodies are modelled with sure brush-strokes, show a remarkable resemblance to Byzantine court works of the tenth century' (Kurz 1964, p.275), although the far-reaching differences noted by Otto Kurz render precise dating 'impossible until a close and dated parallel can be found'. At the moment this 'remarkable miniature remains isolated' (Kurz 1964, p.275; Der Nersessian 1993, p.92).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

301

Four Gospels with Christ Blessing, , folio 69r–70r

Cilicia, 1239
Paper, 111+230+111, folios, 23 × 12 cm

The Bible Society and the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, MSS.m 77
SELECTED REFERENCES: Nersessian 1987; London 2001; Nersessian forthcoming

The full-page portrait (folio 7b) of Christ blessing shows him sitting on a cushion with a red book in his left hand. The symbols of the Evangelists are below, almost as supporters. The inscription in large letters around Christ's figure spells, above, T[e]R A[stoua]DS (Lord God) and, below, Y[isou]S K'[risto]S (Jesus Christ). Above the cushion in small letters are the terms Manuel (left) and Mesiay (right) [Manuel and Messiah]. The text in classical Armenian is written in regular *bolorgir* script. The four Gospels were copied by the scribe Partagh, son of the priest Nahapet in 1239. The manuscript was renewed and rebound by Step'annos, as a memorial 'to his immature son Basil and spiritual father and master Simeon' in 1427.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

302

A Miracle of St Menas

Nubia, 1053
Parchment,15.5 × 10 cm; 18 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6805
PROVENANCE: found in a stone coffer buried in the mountains of Edfu in Upper Egypt, and purchased by the Trustees of the British Museum, 1908
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hyvernat 1888, plates 16, 17; Budge 1909; Dalton 1911, pp.606–7, London 1978, no.44, pl.7; Wiesbaden 1996, no.259, p.240; Barcelona 2003, no.241, p.266; Paris 2000a, nos 5–6, p.40; London 2007, p.206

St Menas (fol. 10a) is on horseback and wears a tunic, belt, and cloak, parts of which are decorated with a braided bordering, and holds in his right hand a long spear, whose tip is turned towards the ground. It is significant to note that the end of the spear-shaft is not in the form of a cross, as is usually the case in Coptic pictures of military saints on horseback, e.g. those of St Theodore and St Victor (Hyvernat 1888, pls 16 and 17). Above his head are three 'crowns of light incorruptible, like those of the Holy Trinity' (Book of Acts of Saints, MS Or. 689, fol. 73b ff.), the one in the centre being surmounted by a Coptic cross. To the right, at the foot of the page, is the figure of a bearded man grasping the left forehoof of the saint's horse with his right hand. The popularity of Menas is attested by the saint's images preserved in stone and ivory as well as on pilgrim flasks, made near the sanctuary, but found all round the Mediterranean: from Alexandria to the Upper Nile valley, from Egypt to Greece.

The kingdom of Nubia was converted to Christianity between 530 and 580 through sponsored missions from Byzantium during the reign of Justinian I (527–65), but the Arab invasions in the seventh century isolated Nubia from Byzantium, although Greek continued to be used in inscriptions and Byzantine influences on church art persisted. Christian Nubia remained independent until 1323. The book has the Life of St Mena, or Minas (faithful and blessed), and a sermon on the Canons of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325). The language is considered to be one of the native African dialects used by the Nubian Christians of the northern Sudan. 'The manuscript is in fact one of the very few remains of the literature of the Church of Nubia, and linguistically is of the greatest value' (Budge 1909, p.1).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

303

The Four Gospels with title page of St Matthew's Gospel, folio 116v–117r

Nitria, 1308
Paper, 26.5 × 19.7 cm; 166 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 425
SELECTED REFERENCES: Crum 1905, no.736, pp.323–4; Wiesbaden 1996, no.259, p.240

The Gospels are preceded by the Eusebian Canon tables and the title pages of the Gospels are blank rectangles coloured yellow instead of the gilded illustrations of the earlier manuscripts. The Arab conquest of Egypt in 642 seems a fairly innocuous event in Christian sources but it resulted in the gradual disappearance of Greek as a spoken and even as a liturgical language, and the substitution of the Bohairic dialect of Coptic as the liturgical language during the Patriarchate of Gabriel II (1132–45) finally put an end to the Byzantine efforts to control the Church and opened a new era in the history of the Egyptian Church. By the eleventh century the Copts became bilingual and finally Arabic-speaking, retaining Bohairic for Scriptures and service books, accompanied by Arabic translation. In this bilingual Bohairic-Arabic copy of the Four Gospels, the Arabic is presented in a parallel column to the right of the Coptic text representing the opening page of St Matthew's Gospel (folio 8).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

304

Gospel lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre and Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene, folio 160

Syria or Mesopotamia, around 1220
Tempera on paper; bold estrangelo script, 47 × 36 cm; 264 folios

The British Library, London, Add. 7170
SELECTED REFERENCES: Buchthal 1940; Buchthal and Kurz 1942, no.19, pp.13–14; Leroy 1964, p.313; London 1978, no.29, pl.II, pp.23–31, New York 1997, no.254, p.385; London 2001, no.132, p.200; London 2007, no.125

An inscription in gold letters on blue at the end of the Easter Lection (fol. 185) records that the manuscript was copied during the prelacy of Mar (abbot) Iwannis, 'patriarch of all the universe' (1208–20), and Mar Ignatios, katolikos of the East (1216–22). No location is indicated, but the manuscript is almost a twin of a lectionary in the Vatican (Syr. 559) completed on 2 May 1220 in the Monastery of Mar Mattei, near Mosul in northern Mesopotamia.

This opening shows two events, Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene and the Holy Women's visit to the tomb, combined in a single composition. The inscription in the picture reads 'Our Lord Jesus Christ appears to the women' and 'The angel on the tomb'. According to Hugo Buchthal, the explanation for the composite style of this manuscript is that, as early as 1180, the Arabs in Syria appropriated the Byzantine style of form, a pictorial tradition that was Mediterranean in character, though Islamic in its outward appearance: 'Byzantine illustration treated in the Arab style shows the adaptability of Byzantine imagery to local tastes and styles' (Buchthal 1940, Leroy 1964).

VREJ NERSESSIAN

305

A book of homilies, folio 1v

Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of Cairo, 989–90
Parchment, 37 × 27.5 cm; 28 folios

The British Library, London, Or. 6789
SELECTED REFERENCES: De Rustafjael 1909; Layton 1987, no.151, pp.174–6; Wiesbaden 1996, no.270; London 2007, p.219

The manuscript comprises several distinct texts, which at some time were secondarily united and bound in their present order. All parts are by the same scribe and written in identical style: (1) The Repose of St John the Evangelist; (2) Gregory of Nazianzos, Homily on the Devil and St Michael Archangel; (3) Epiphanies of Salamis, On the Virgin Mary; and (4) Cyril of Alexandria, On the Virgin Mary.

In fol. 1v, the central figures in the hagiographical texts assembled are St John and the Virgin Mary. St John is represented standing holding a book, probably his Gospel, and the Virgin is suckling the Christ Child. Although the Virgin holds her breast with her hand, her index finger is extended pointing to the Child, who is seated frontally, and she is seated on a throne. This imagery may be a modification of the standard Byzantine imagery of the Virgin as Hodegetria (one who shows the way), in which the Virgin points to the Child as the Messiah, shown as a small adult rather than an infant. Philotheos the deacon, copyist and artist, records in the colophon placed below the frontispiece that the manuscript was copied in Ihrit el-Gharbiya, Fayum, south of Cairo, between 29 August 989 and 28 August 990.

VREJ NERSESSIAN

306

Fragments of a dish

Syria, end of thirteenth–first half of fourteenth century
Yellowish paste, white slip, painted with blue, black, turquoise

and brown under transparent greenish glaze, maximum length 31 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv no.823
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt
SELECTED REFERENCES: Cairo 1922, pl.123; Athens 1980, no.197, pp.40–1; Philon 1983; Paris 2001A, nos 102–3, p.118 (A. Ballian)

The fragments were part of a large dish painted with the Deposition from the Cross. An additional fragment in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo partly shows the Virgin embracing her son's body with great emotion and laying her face against his. This was a popular image of sorrow in Byzantium. The two Marys on the dish are shown with the emotional gestures normally associated with the Crucifixion scene.

While the iconography is closely associated with Byzantine models, the overall style demonstrates the Islamic cultural environment of Eastern Christianity. The facial features with the slanting eyes are found in thirteenth-century Muslim, Syriac and Coptic manuscripts, as well as on Syrian underglazed pottery, where the dotted halos and the profile of the dish are also encountered. But the chronological frame is provided by the influence of Il-Khanid pottery, evident in the raised and dotted white leaves on the background, the decorative lotus panelling of the exterior and the Chinese cloud scrolls surrounding the hovering angels. It is most likely that the strange, non-Christian depiction of St John shown with dishevelled hair, resembling the mourners on the Great Mongol Shah-Nameh, is of the same Mongol provenance.

Christian subjects are depicted on thirteenth-century inlaid metalwork and glass and evoke the vitality of Christian communities in the Middle East during the Late Ayyubid and Early Mamluk periods. The few inscribed pieces show that they were commissioned by Muslim patrons. In the case of the Deposition dish a Christian patronage is more likely. The dish may have been either used for the Eucharist, as a paten in which the bread was held, or associated with a special ceremony of a monastery or a church.

ANNA BALLIAN

307

Door panels from the Church of the Virgin, al-Mu'allaqa, Old Cairo

c.1300
Cedarwood, approximately 31 × 13.1 × 2.5 cm

The Trustees of the British Museum, London, MLA 1878.1203.1-10
SELECTED REFERENCES: Hunt 1989; Hamm 1996, no.102 a–d, pp.140–1 (E. Enss); Hunt 2000, p.14, fig.5; Paris 2000A, no.184, pp.176–7 (C. Entwistle); New York 2004, no.260, pp.432–4 with figs 260.1 and individual, 1–10 (T. K. Thomas); Hunt 2007, pp.56–61 with figs 7–9; Hunt forthcoming

These ten panels can be reconstructed as the doors formerly opening into the baptismal chapel of the 'Hanging' Coptic church, al-Mu'allaqa, in Old Cairo, located in the southern turret of the former Roman fortress of Babylon (Qasr al-Sham). These were probably completed for the refurbishment of the church from 1301 to 1302, following a Byzantine embassy to Cairo. Traces of gesso indicate that the panels were originally gilded, and quite possibly painted, making a link with templon icons.

Their programme of salvation can be deduced from a description of 1872. The panels are paired vertically and horizontally. Cross panels at the top symbolise Christ's triumph over death through the Crucifixion. Below, on the right, the Baptism heads the feast scenes, above the Annunciation and opposite the Nativity/Adoration. The Entry into Jerusalem and the Ascension occupy the next register. Pentecost and the Anastasis (Harrowing of Hell), the Resurrection image of Easter, are at the bottom. Through Baptism the believer achieves salvation, as do Christ's ancestors in the Anastasis. The broken doors of Hell, trampled by Christ, are juxtaposed with the pristine sanctuary gates of Paradise in the Pentecost scene opposite, immediately below Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, the eternal city.

The interaction of different Eastern Christian groups, under Islamic Mamluk rule, explains several elements of the doors. Similar spiky leaves appear on Sultan Lagin's pulpit in the mosque of Ibn Tulun of 1296. The rich narrative detail derives from apocryphal sources in Coptic, Syriac and Armenian. Certain features of the Nativity/Adoration, including the oriental headgear of the Magi, relate to the same scene on a templon screen at Sinai attributable to a Syrian Melkite (Byzantine Orthodox) artist, while the Anastasis relates to an icon at Sinai. The book held by the Virgin of the Annunciation is Western in origin, while the fur tunic of John the Baptist in the Baptism, and the tonsure of an Apostle in the Ascension, are Byzantine.

LUCY-ANNE HUNT

308

Casket

Norman Sicily, twelfth century
Ivory, painted and gilded, gilt copper hinges, 9 × 11.2 × 7.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.10637
PROVENANCE: acquired in Paris, 1923
SELECTED REFERENCES: Gott 1939, no.5; Ballian 2006, no.131, p.112

This rectangular casket with a pyramidal truncated lid decorated with painted and gilded ornamentation is constructed from thin ivory plaques that are secured together by ivory pegs and gilt-copper mounts. Medallions with an arabesque design or peacock birds on a background of red dots, reminiscent of metalwork punched decoration, are the main decorative theme. The rest of the surface features pairs of birds and small circular motifs scattered throughout. The frieze of the lid bears an Arabic inscription written in a poor cursive script. The content of the inscription is probably benedictory, the first word being 'glory' and the second perhaps 'constant'. This conforms to the standard form of inscriptions that prevailed on works of art of the period, expressing general wishes and well-being to anonymous owners.

The casket belongs to a group of about 200 such objects, of various sizes, that are characteristic of ivory production attributed to Norman Sicily of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They are distinguished by a relative homogeneity in decoration and subject-matter, which also includes Christian iconography, affiliated however to the Fatimid style. Such caskets were probably used to store jewellery and other precious objects and a number of these ended up in European church treasuries, along with other works of Islamic art that were regarded as precious in the medieval period.

Sicily remained under Muslim rule for almost two centuries – from the ninth until the end of the eleventh century. When the Christians regained power over the island under the Norman kings, cultural and artistic production there was an amalgamation of Islamic art with the Christian artistic heritage of South Italy and Romanesque France as well as Byzantium. Works of art influenced by the Islamic aesthetic, and in particular by Fatimid art, continued to be produced throughout the twelfth century, as is attested by the existence of a variety of examples, from portable objects such as this, to such monumental works of art as the painted ceiling of the Capella Palatina in Palermo.

MINA MORAITOU

309

Candlestick

Konya, second half of thirteenth century
Brass, cast, engraved and inlaid with silver, 20.1 × 19.5 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.13043
SELECTED REFERENCES: Rice 1954, pp.1–39, pl.8, fig.F; Athens 1980, no.115, p.30; Ballian 2006, p.94, fig.100

The candlestick has a distinctive concave body and socket. The decoration consists of several epigraphic bands with benedictory inscriptions, written in a variety of scripts, including an animated cursive script on the neck and a large figural frieze on the body. It contains four roundels alternating with cartouches and linked by eight-lobed rosettes, all set on a dense arabesque background. The cartouches enclose birds of prey attacking birds, while the roundels contain individual figures, part of an entertainment scene: a seated figure raising a drinking cup, two seated musicians, one playing a small lute, the other a large harp, and, finally, a standing figure dancing and holding clappers in his hands.

The candlestick belongs to a group of more than 50 known pieces of similar dimensions and shape; they are distinguished by their wide variety of figural decoration that draws freely from Byzantine, Armenian, Georgian, Crusader or Western European sources (Venice 1993, nos 129–31, pp.241–4 [R. Ward]). Several iconographic and epigraphic features of the Benaki candlestick are shared with a candlestick in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and another in the Los Angeles County Museum, but their place of manufacture is not known. The mixing of styles and the more typical Islamic repertoire of courtly entertainment characterises the art of the Seljuqs of Rum. Two candlesticks carrying Mevlevi verses, and thus associated with Konya (the Byzantine Iconium), make the attribution of at least some of the candlesticks to the capital of the Sultanate plausible (Melikian-Chirvani 1987).

All candlesticks of this group that can be traced originate from Turkey and the majority of the pieces are still preserved there. Two candlesticks in the Athonite monasteries of St Paul and Docheiariou are exceptions (Thessaloniki 1997C, no.9.28, pp.322–3 [A. Ballian]). It is not known, however, how they were acquired. The St Paul candlestick serves as a base for a Venetian cross and was acquired after the refoundation of the monastery in the 1380s. There is an interesting clue to explain how the candlestick came to be in the Monastery of Docheiariou. The monks owned a boat and travelled for commercial reasons to the ports of Africa and to Constantinople, where they may have acquired the candlestick.

ANNA BALLIAN

310

Lustre-painted bowl with giraffe

Egypt, late tenth–early eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.749
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt, 1937
SELECTED REFERENCES: Ettinghausen 1956, p.266; Philon 1980, fig.464, p.220; Paris 1998, no.36, p.112; Meinecke-Berg 1999, pp.354–56, fig.69; Ballian 2006, no.51, p.67

This ceramic bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, has a monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque glaze. The central theme is a giraffe shown between its groom and a tree, on a background filled with contour panels with the design known as 'peacock's eye'. The figure of the groom is shown in motion, as if walking out of the rim and looking backwards while holding the animal on a leash. He wears a short tunic, a turban on his head and boots on his feet while tiraz bands decorate his arms and headdress. The giraffe wears a saddle decorated with a palmette scroll and is portrayed following the groom. The tree is curved and skilfully fills the space behind the animal while following the shape of the bowl. The reverse displays concentric circles and loosely applied strokes.

An inscribed fragmentary bowl with the name of the artist – 'the work of Muslim (ib)n al-Dahhan' – is conserved in Cairo and displays the same scene but in a double mirror image (Meinecke-Berg 1999, p.354, fig.11). The similarity in the design of the two bowls is striking, leading to the assumption that the Benaki bowl was created by the same artist. The same signature appears on a dish fragment in the Benaki Museum, Athens, with additional information which indicates that the artist lived during the time of the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim (996–1021) (Philon 1980, no.404, p.198), thereby dating this bowl to the same period.

Giraffes were regarded as exotic and prestigious animals and are frequently mentioned in medieval texts. Customarily, they were brought out to impress either caliphs on festival celebrations or ambassadors. On other occasions they were sent as gifts to neighbouring courts, as the giraffe and the elephant were to Constantine IX Monomachos by al-Mustansir in 1053 (Ševčenko 2002, p.77).

MINA MORAITOU

311

Bowl with leopard and trainer

Egypt, eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 24.3 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.1119
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt, 1950
SELECTED REFERENCES: Philon 1980, fig.467, p.221; Baer 1999; Meinecke-Berg 1999, fig.66, p.352; Paris 2000A, no.37, p.112; Ballian 2006, no.31, p.47

This fragmentary bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, is decorated with lustre painting over an opaque white glaze. The inside of the bowl is treated as a painting surface with no divisions. Although the central part of the bowl is missing, it is possible to suggest, from surviving imagery, that it contained a leopard accompanied by its trainer, probably an old man. The leopard is shown sitting on its back legs while the man kneels. The man appears to be bald, and wears a belted tunic with tiraz bands and boots. A swirling palmette tree is used effectively to create a background for the scene. The reverse is decorated with lustre circles and strokes.

The task of reconstructing the design was made easier by basing it on other works of art from the Fatimid period with which it shared certain similarities. For example, it is possible to relate the figure of the leopard to that carved on the rock-crystal ewer inscribed with the name of the Caliph al-Aziz (975–996) that is today kept in the Treasury of San Marco, Venice (Venice 1993, no.61, p.153). The animal appears to be standing in a similar posture and has its tail curled around its hind leg. Furthermore, an image of a man carrying a basket on a fragmentary dish in the Keir Collection (Richmond, Surrey) displays similar facial features and clothing details to the trainer (Watson 1988, no.C7, pp.149–50).

This bowl belongs to a group of ceramic wares representing scenes of everyday life at court. During the Fatimid period, leopards were regarded as rare and exotic creatures. They were objects of admiration at the caliph's court and were used in the royal hunt. As they evoke an image of authority and prestige, they may have been portrayed only on luxury items.

MINA MORAITOU

312

Lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer

Egypt, eleventh century
Earthenware painted in lustre colours over a glaze, diameter 28 cm

Benaki Museum, Athens, inv.no.206
PROVENANCE: acquired in Egypt in 1935
SELECTED REFERENCES: Philon 1980, fig.464, p.220; Paris 1998, no.36, p.112; Meinecke-Berg 1999, p.352, fig.5; Rouen 2002, no.139, p.184; Ballian 2006, no.52, p.67

This fragmentary ceramic bowl, which has been restored and repainted in areas, has monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque glaze. It is decorated with a seated barefooted figure on a background ornamented with a dense palmette scroll. The figure, shown in three-quarter view, has long hair kept together by a headband, and holds a conical cup in one hand. He is dressed in an elaborate tunic decorated with cross motifs and large palmettes; the sleeves bear schematised tiraz bands. The reverse of the bowl is painted with lustre circles and strokes. Inside the footring are faint traces of the artist's signature, probably the name Tabib.

This popular theme is the subject of two lustre dishes in the Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, that display the cup-bearer figure sitting cross-legged. One is signed with the artist's name, Ja'far, and displays a figure with long braids holding two cups and clad in a dress decorated with large palmettes rendered in a stylised manner (Grube and Johns 2005, no.14.6, p.115). In comparison, the other Cairo bowl, which is unsigned, shows a cup-bearer with similar features on a less crowded background. The treatment of the clothing is closer to the Benaki bowl in that it exhibits an attempt to achieve a realistic representation in the costume which follows to some extent the form of the body underneath (Paris 1998, no 35, p.111).

The cup-bearer is part of the iconography of court figures engaged in everyday activities such as drinking, playing music, dancing and hunting wild animals. A recurrent theme in the Fatimid artistic tradition, it is found not only in ceramics but also in woodwork, ivory, textiles and painting. This iconographic cycle is particularly popular during this period when artists show an interest in the human form and, although they are continuing the Abbasid painting tradition, obtain a higher degree of naturalism reminiscent of Late Antique prototypes.

MINA MORAITOU

9
The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

313

Icon with Christ with SS. Sergios and Bacchos

Constantinople, sixth or seventh century
Encaustic and gold on pine, 28.5 × 41.8 cm

The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Arts, Kiev, inv. no. 11
PROVENANCE: taken by Archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij from the Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai, to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann 1976, pp. 28–30; Fowden 1999, Los Angeles 2006, no. 127 (T. F. Mathews)

Sergios and Bacchos are shown as very youthful saints each wearing a gold chiton with a carmine clavus and a white chlamys held in place with a gold clasp. They have large ornamental gold torques (maniakia) around their necks, signs of their officer rank in the army. They hold martyrs' crosses because they were executed in Syria in around 300 after refusing as Christians to sacrifice to Zeus. Both saints were very popular in the east as healers and defenders: Justinian and Theodora founded a monastery and church in their honour at Constantinople, their cult centre was at the pilgrimage city of Sergiopolis (Rusafa) in the desert north of Palmyra, and the treasure of Kaper Koraon, a village in Syria with a church dedicated to St Sergios, might have included the Antioch Chalice (cat. 19).

The medium of the painting is encaustic on wood; the panel has cracked horizontally and the paint surface has been retouched in several places (the saints' names were added later). The thick impasto style of the painting is very similar to one of the early encaustic icons at Sinai with the Virgin and Child, angels and two military saints (Mathews, in Los Angeles 2006). The precise dating of this Virgin panel is a matter of debate, although there is agreement that the style belongs before iconoclasm and in the sixth or seventh century. One speculative argument is that Justinian, as the founder of the present monastery between 550 and 565, sent a set of icons to adorn it. This is the basis for dating several icons, including this one, to the sixth century and for suggesting them to be the work of the artists of Constantinople. Others suggest a seventh-century date for this panel and a possible provenance in one of the cult centres.

ROBIN CORMACK

314

Icon with the Virgin and Child

Constantinople, sixth century
Encaustic and gold on larch, 35.4 × 20.6 cm

The Bohdan and Varvara Khanenko Museum of Arts, Kiev, inv. no. 112
PROVENANCE: taken by Archimandrite Porphyrij Uspenskij from the Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai, to Kiev in the mid-nineteenth century
SELECTED REFERENCES: Weitzmann 1976, no. 15–8; Athens 2000, no. 2, pp. 264–5 (R. Cormack)

The Virgin Mary holds Christ high on her shoulder, gripping his body tightly in her crossed arms. Both figures look to the left, although she is turned towards Christ; he holds out his right hand with an open palm. This is an unusual composition, and not, for example, the Hodegetria type that becomes so common after iconoclasm. The vertical gold stroke to the right of the Virgin's halo has been read as a fragment of Greek lettering that describes her as St Mary, a form known in the Early Byzantine period. Interpretation of the meaning of the composition is complicated by the fact that the icon has at some time in its history been cut and reshaped. About 4 cm are missing from the left side, perhaps more below, and the upper part has been altered to fit a Gothic-style frame. One interpretation is that the original icon was an Adoration of the Magi, now severely cut down, but that does not seem likely. Probably it was originally a devotion panel of the Virgin and Child that was adapted during the Crusader period, perhaps by Latin pilgrims, because of its venerable status in the monastery. The elaborate punched rosettes in the gold haloes may belong to this period of veneration. There are also some modern restorations.

The use of encaustic, and the stylistic connections with other early icons in the monastery that have been dated to the sixth or seventh century, are the basis for the suggested date in the sixth century and the attribution to Constantinople.

ROBIN CORMACK

315

Icon of St George and scenes of his life and miracles

Sinai (?), beginning of the thirteenth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 127 × 80.6 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58, vol. 1, pl. 167, vol. 2, pp. 149–51; Weitzmann 1984b, pp. 98–9; Constantinides 1997; Ševčenko 1999, p. 151, fig. 2; Walter 2003, p. 137; New York 2004, no. 228, pp. 372–3 (N. P. Ševčenko)

The icon has a central representation of a standing St George dressed as a soldier and a frame with twenty scenes from the martyrdom and miracles of the saint. This number of scenes is the highest known in an icon of this type. The narrative starts on the upper-left corner with St George distributing his belongings to the poor and ends on the bottom right with the burial of the saint. There is an emphasis on his martyrdom as fifteen of the scenes illustrate events of it, such as the saint burned with torches, in the lime pit, scratched, on the wheel and decapitated by sword. This type of icon is called a vita or biographical icon and Sinai has the richest and earliest collection of such icons with saints especially venerated in the monastery, as St Catherine (New York 2004, no. 201, pp. 341–3 [N. P. Ševčenko]) and Moses (Mouriki 1995).

We cannot be certain about the exact function or placement of these icons, but for the vita icon of St Catherine, there is evidence that it stood by the tomb of the saint inside the church at Sinai. It has been argued that vita icons are an invention of Byzantium in regions in the East Mediterranean with mixed cultures venerating the same saints but in different languages and literary traditions (Ševčenko 1999).

The donor of the icon is shown in miniature scale to the left of St George and an inscription above his head reads: ΑΓΙΕ ΤΟΥ Θ(ΕΟ)Υ ΒΟΗΘΙ ΤΟΝ CON ΔΟΥΛΟΝ ΙΩ(ΑΝΝΗΝ) Μ(ΟΝΑ)Χ(ΟΝ) Κ(ΑΙ) ΗΕΡΕΑΝ ΤΟΝ ΕΚ ΠΟΘΟΥ ΚΤΙCΑΝΤΑ ΤΗΝ CIN ΗΚΟΝΑ ΤΟΝ ΗΒΕΡΟΝ ('O saint of God, help your servant John, monk and priest, who with desire commissioned your image, the Georgian').

There was a Georgian community of monks at Sinai at least from the eleventh century and maybe this icon was commissioned at Sinai by the Georgian monk and priest John. The back of the icon has the wavy black and red stripes which may indicate a production at Sinai.

MARIA VASSILAKI

316

Icon of the Prophet Moses before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law

Sinai (?), late twelfth–early thirteenth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 132.5 × 69.9 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58, vol. 1, fig. 75, vol. 2, pp. 89–90; Weitzmann 1984b, pp. 102–06; Mouriki 1990, p. 110, fig. 24; Vocotopoulos 1995, nos 57–8, p. 204; St Petersburg and London 2000, no. S59, pp. 242–4 (Y. Piatnitsky); Los Angeles 2006, no. 29, p. 193 (G. Parpulov)

The Prophet Moses is receiving the tablets of law from the hand of God, which appears from a quadrant on the upper left corner. The Burning Bush is painted at the bottom-left corner of the icon. Moses is barefoot; his sandals lie on the green ground. This composition reflects the sixth-century mosaics above the conch of the apse of the monastery church, except that the artist has chosen to show Moses as a young man and not bearded. An inscription on the bottom frame of the icon reads: ΟC ICΤΟΡΗCEN Ω ΘΕΟΠΙΤΑ CON ΤΥΠΟΝ ΑΙΤΕΙ CΤΕΦΑΝΟC ΑΥCΗΝ ΑΜΠΛΑΚΗΜΑ(ΤΩΝ) ('the person who painted your likeness, named Stephen, requests, O God-seer, release from his errors'). Next to it an inscription in Arabic translates as: 'O you who have seen God, grant forgiveness to Stephanos who painted your virtues'. Above the Burning Bush a later inscription in Greek reads: ΜΝΗCΤΙΤΗ Κ(ΥΡΙ)Ε ΤΗΝ ΨΥΧΗΝ ΜΑΝΟΥ/ΥΛ ('Remember, Lord, the soul of Manuel').

It has been proposed that Stephanos was both the painter and donor of this icon, though it has been also argued that he was the donor alone (Parpulov in Los Angeles 2006, p. 193). The generally accepted dating of the icon in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century has been recently challenged (Parpulov in Los Angeles 2006, p. 193).

It is believed that this icon was made for the Church of the Prophet Moses on the summit of the Horeb mountain (Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 204) It forms a pair with that of the Prophet Elijah (Los Angeles 2006, no. 28, p. 191 [G. Parpulov]), presumably meant for the chapel built at the site of the cave at Mount Horeb, where the prophet took refuge. In the late sixteenth century the two icons were placed on either side of the entrance from the narthex into the nave of the monastery church (Los Angeles 2006, p. 193).

The rear side of the icon is decorated with wavy black and red stripes and this has been taken as an indicator trademark for icons produced at Sinai.

MARIA VASSILAKI

317

Iconostasis beam with the Great Feasts and Deisis

Sinai (?), around 1200
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 152.3 × 38.7 cm; 25.8 × 38.5 cm (Koimesis of the Virgin)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai
SELECTED REFERENCES: Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58, vol. 1, figs 112–16, vol. 2, pp. 111–12; Weitzmann 1984b, pp. 75–80, figs 8–14; Mouriki 1990, p. 106–7, figs 31–33; Vocotopoulos 1995, nos 34–7, pp. 199–200; New York 1997, no. 248, pp. 377, 379 (A. Weyl Carr)

This is the central part of a templon beam, which now survives in several pieces. This section painted on a single piece of wood, has the Deisis at the centre, the Transfiguration and Baptism of Christ on the left, the Raising of Lazarus and the Entry into Jerusalem on the right. The entire length of the full iconostasis suggests that it could have been made for the templon of the central nave of the monastery church at Sinai. It includes the twelve major church feasts (the Annunciation, Nativity, Presentation of Christ to the Temple, Baptism of Christ, Transfiguration, Raising of Lazarus, Entry into Jerusalem, Crucifixion, Anastasis, Ascension, Pentecost and Koimeisis of the Virgin), two scenes from the infancy of the Virgin (the Birth and Presentation to the Temple) and the Deisis in the middle.

This section is the work of a painter with a distinctive style. He favours bright colours such as orange and blue and has an unusual technique of quick brush strokes. Landscape is far more important in his scenes than the architectural background, which is kept to the minimum. This 'innovative' style is mainly exhibited in this central fragment and the scenes of the Pentecost and the Koimesis of the Virgin. This disparity between scenes led Weitzmann to suggest that three painters worked for the entire work. It is true that scenes, such as the Crucifixion and the Anastasis lack the daring approach to the soft modelling of figures and the use of bright colours, which is so conspicuous in scenes like the Raising of Lazarus. Perhaps therefore one can suggest that the painter of the central section was the master under whom painters of a workshop operated.

Sinai has preserved an impressive number of templon beams dating from the twelfth century onwards (Weitzmann 1984b, pp. 64–86, figs 1–17), which may have been executed in situ by accomplished painters working at Sinai but trained elsewhere.

MARIA VASSILAKI

318, 319, 320, 321

Deisis with St Peter, Archangel Michael, Archangel Gabriel, St Paul

Sinai (?), thirteenth century
Tempera on wood, 105.7 × 71.1 cm (Peter); 105.5 × 75.5 cm (Michael); 105 × 75 cm (Gabriel); 104.3 × 69.8 cm (Paul)

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. S62, p. 250 (Y. Piatnitsky); New York 2004, no. 240, pp. 384–5 (V. N. Marinis); Drandaki 2004, especially p. 38

These four panels of similar size and style can be reconstructed as part of a set of Great Deisis icons from a sanctuary screen from the monastery at Sinai. What is lacking from the centre are the three icons of St John the Baptist, Christ and the Virgin Mary. The main church (the *katholikon*) and other chapels inside the precinct and on the mountains around all needed icons as the templon screen and iconostasis of the Orthodox church evolved, and in the various rooms of the monastery are the scattered component elements of many different screens. The *katholikon* of the monastery today has a massive screen made by the Cretan artist Jeremias in 1612. One question is whether these panels formed a set for one of the earlier periods of adornment of this church below the sixth-century mosaic of the Transfiguration, which has over the years been progressively obscured as the sanctuary has become more enclosed by icons.

Each of these icons has in common the use of a real gold-leaf ground (many large icons in the monastery economised by using coloured varnish over a cheaper metal to 'fake' a gold ground), and the figures share many similarities of colour scheme and style. The angels have gold (so-called chrysographia) in their garments, as do Peter and Paul. One distinctive feature of both angels are the hairbands and the large ornamental red ruby set in gold with four white pearls held by pins; this same design is found in the hair of the Archangel Gabriel in the sanctuary doors from (now) elsewhere in the monastery (cat. 322). This opens the question of whether these icons all formed part of a relatively high screen (an early iconostasis) in the *katholikon*, erected at some time in the thirteenth century. If this controversial proposal is accepted, they would mark a turning point in the history of the Byzantine screen, as it developed from the templon with an epistyle and intercolumnar icons into the high iconostasis currently best known in Russian churches from the late fourteenth century.

ROBIN CORMACK

322

Sanctuary door with Annunciation

Sinai (?), thirteenth century
Tempera on linen over wood, 120 × 34.3 cm and 118 × 32.2 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine's at Sinai, Chapel of the Five Martyrs of Sebaste
SELECTED REFERENCES: St Petersburg and London 2000, no. S55, p. 236 (Y. Piatnitsky)

These two leaves of a double door are one of the earliest surviving examples of Byzantine sanctuary 'heavenly' or 'holy gates'. They have been shaved down slightly for secondary reuse at some date in the chapel of the Five Martyrs, having originally fitted into a slightly wider opening, but like all such doors they were always relatively narrow. Over the centuries the lower parts of the panels have been spotted by water, due to regular washing of the floor of the church.

The Annunciation (Ο ΧΑΙΡΕΤΙCΜΟC) is the standard scene for the doors of the sanctuary screen between the congregation and the altar (symbolically the barrier between heaven and earth in the church building). In this case Gabriel stands firmly in front of a low wall and faces the Virgin. He wears a green tunic and a pastel pink cloak, and his long curling hair is tied up with a band which has at its centre a large red ruby set in gold with four white pearls held by pins. The Mother of God stands spinning in front of a regal stool with a red cushion on which is thrown a white cloth. She is dressed also in green and has a purple maphorion. Her gesture is one of surprise, but the expression of her face is one of calm acceptance of the announcement of the coming birth of the son of God.

Piatnitsky, who was the first to publish these paintings (St Petersburg and London 2000), dated them to the late twelfth century. However, a slightly later date in the thirteenth century is possible, as is a connection with the icons from a Deisis group (cats 318, 319, 320, 321).

ROBIN CORMACK

323

Icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos

Constantinople or Sinai, late twelfth century
Egg tempera and gold leaf on wood, primed with cloth and gesso, 41.1 × 29.1 cm

The Holy Monastery of St Catherine, Sinai
SELECTED REFERENCES: Mouriki 1990, p. 107, fig. 24; Belting 1994, pp. 272–3, fig. 165; New York 1997, no. 247, pp. 376–7 (K. Corrigan); Los Angeles 2006, no. 48, pp. 244–7 (B. Pentcheva); Cormack 2007a, pp. 18–20, fig. 11

This is the earliest surviving icon depicting the Heavenly Ladder, which is the theme of a treatise written by St John Klimakos (of the Ladder) in the seventh century. John (*c.* 579–650) was a monk at Sinai, who later became abbot of the monastery. His text is divided into 30 chapters, as was the age of Christ before his baptism. The text speaks of the vices that a monk has to avoid and of the virtues that he has to acquire in order to reach God.

A ladder with 30 rungs crosses the composition of the icon diagonally and unites earth with heaven. On top of the ladder is St John Klimakos, followed by the abbot of the monastery Antonios, who may have commissioned this icon. Their names are written in red majuscule letters on the golden background. Christ, half-length, appears from a quadrant, which represents heaven, and is blessing St John, who is reaching him. A long row of monks are following St John and Antonios, all looking up towards heaven. Those defeated by temptation are pulled down by black devils with the help of black chains. They will be punished in Hell. The mouth of Hell is at the bottom of the ladder and one of the monks is already half way inside it. Some monks at the bottom right are attending the scene and are raising their arms in prayer. Some angels at the upper left are also part of the narrative, as they have a vital role to play in the text of the Heavenly Ladder. Their haloes resemble spinning wheels, as they are polished to reflect light. This technique of burnishing is a characteristic of several icons produced at Sinai. The back of the icon shows crosses within medallions, a decoration found in other twelfth-century icons from Sinai, with which this icon has been connected in style, such as the icon of the Annunciation (New York 1997, no. 246, pp. 374–5 [A. Weyl Carr]).

The theme of the Heavenly Ladder is rare in icon painting and was first developed in illuminated manuscripts with this popular text in the late eleventh century onwards (Vat. Gr. 394, Sinai cod. 418).

MARIA VASSILAKI

Endnotes

The Art of Byzantium: 330–1453
(pages 34–43)

1 Cameron 2006.
2 Cormack 2000a, p. 125.
3 Stewart 2008, pp. 139–42.
4 Weitzmann 1979, p. 213.
5 Barber and Jenkins 2006.
6 Maguire 1995a.
7 Pentcheva 2006.
8 Cormack 1997.
9 Belting 1994.
10 Mango 1972, p. 186.

1 The Beginnings of Christian Art
(pages 44–63)

1 Mango 1985.
2 Dalgic 2008.
3 Bagnall 1982.
4 On the problem of dating catacomb painting, see De Bruyne 1968, Bisconti 1994, Guyon 1994 and Salvadori 2002, Appendix II: 'The Chronology of Paleochristian Funerary Painting in Rome'.
5 On Christian attitudes towards images in the first centuries, see Finney 1994.
6 Frankfurter 1998.
7 Mathews 2003; Andaloro 2006, pp. 114–24.
8 Schlatter 1989.
9 Rouse 1902.

2 From Constantine to Iconoclasm
(pages 64–109)

1 Friedländer 1912, p. 227.
2 MacCormack 1981, pp. 17–89.
3 MacCormack 1981, pp. 20, 45, 77–8.
4 See Mathews 1993, pp. 41–4.
5 Urbana-Champaign 1989, p. 208, no. 129.
6 Kitzinger 1998, pp. 50, 130, 146–9.
7 Vogt 1967, vol. 2, p. 115.
8 Vogt 1967, vol. 1, pp. 132–4.
9 Vogt 1967, vol. 2, pp. 40–1.
10 New York 1997, pp. 190–1.
11 Cameron 1976, pp. 66–8, 106–7, 188–91.
12 *Patrologia graeca*, 112, col. 1049.
13 Vogt 1967, vol. 1, p. 7.
14 Weitzmann 1976, pp. 24–5.
15 Kitzinger 1954.
16 Buckton 1994, pp. 120–1.
17 Delehaye 1910, p. 129.
18 Urbana-Champaign 1989.
19 Theophanes [1883], p. 405.
20 Peers 2004, pp. 35–8.

3 At Court

(pages 110–139)

1 Litavrin 1972, pp. 248, 268.
2 In Washington DC. Weitzmann 1972A, no. 25.
3 In the Grünes Gewölbe. Cutler 1994, fig. 226.
4 Oikonomides 1995, p. 75.
5 For this primary source see Cutler 1994, p. 278, note 87.
6 Hahnloser 1971, no. 41 (M. E. Frazer).
7 Ševčenko 1994.
8 New York 1997, no. 140 (I. Kalavrezou).
9 Weitzmann 1976, no. B58.
10 Cutler 1994, p. 205 and fig. 222.
11 For the textual sources and discussion, see Cutler 1999, p. 696.
12 In the Louvre, Paris. New York 1997, no. 29.
13 Hahnloser 1971, no. 25 (A. Frolow).
14 Frolow 1961, p. 282, no. 245; p. 309, no. 296.
15 Buchthal 1974.

4.1 At Home: 1 Ceramics of Everyday Life

(pages 140–149)

1 Hayes 1972.
2 Vroom 2003, pp. 331–3.
3 Maguire and Dauterman Maguire 2007, pp. 58–96.
4 Hayes 1972, figs 51, 54–7, 78, 79.
5 Urbana-Champaign 1989, pp. 16–33.
6 Vroom 2003, pp. 238–9, 331–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2005, pp. 119–20, fig. 5.
7 Bakirtzis 1989, pp. 55–65; Sanders 2000, p. 165.
8 Hayes 1992, p. 13; Sanders 2003, p. 390.
9 Hayes 1992, pp. 35–7; Sanders 2001.
10 Hayes 1992, pp. 12–37.
11 New York 1997, no. 28, pp. 67–8 (H. C. Evans) and no. 281, pp. 421–2 (P. Soucek).
12 Sanders 2000, p. 166; Sanders 2003, p. 394.
13 Thessaloniki 1999.
14 Ballian and Drandaki 2003.
15 Thessaloniki 1999, no. 34, p. 48 (T. Tsanana), no. 37, p. 50 (C. Koilakou).
16 Thessaloniki 2002, no. 223, pp. 200–1 (M. Michaelidou).
17 Thessaloniki 1999, p. 21; Vroom 2003, pp. 238–9, 332–3; Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2005, pp. 121–3, fig. 7.
18 Thessaloniki 1999, nos 76–110.
19 Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2003, pp. 45, 63–4.
20 Papanikola-Bakirtzi 2004, pp. 44–5.

4.2 At Home: 2 Metalwork of Everyday Life

(pages 150–161)

1 Dodd 1961, nos 28, 33, 35, 37–9, 54, 58–66, 78 (Cyprus); nos 32, 40–3, 48–50 (Mytilene).
2 Ballian and Drandaki 2003.
3 Mundell Mango 2007, pp. 136–9.
4 Mundell Mango 2007, pp. 128–33.
5 Mundell Mango 2007, p. 140, fig. 14.19.
6 Leader-Newby 2004, pp. 159–60.

4.3 At Home: 3 Jewellery and Adornment

(pages 162–193)

1 Yeroulanou 1999 *passim*.
2 Vermeule 1975, pp. 5–32.
3 Ross 1965, nos 1–4; Grabar 1951; Dennison 1918; Stylianou and Stylianou 1963; Athens 1964, pp. 322–6, 378–88; Thessaloniki 1997B, no. 222, pp. 222–33.
4 Dallas 1984, pp. 109–67.
5 New York 1997, no. 145, p. 187; Athens 2001, pp. 70–1, 78–83
6 Delivorrias 1999, pp. 357–470.

5 At Church

(pages 194–247)

1 For a good introduction to Byzantine religion, see Cunningham 2002. For more on the material discussed here, Safran 1998 is recommended and Mathews 1997 touches on similar themes.
2 Gregory's comment came in Florence at the time of the Council of Ferrara in 1438. Quoted in Sylvester Syropoulos, *Vera historia*, p. 109; translation from Mango 1986.
3 This phrase was used by the eighth-century patriarch, Germanos: see Germanos (1984).
4 For church architecture, see Mango 1978, Krautheimer 1986, Ousterhout 1998, Ousterhout 1999.
5 The Twelve Great Feasts are the Birth of the Mother of God, the Presentation of the Mother of God, the Annunciation, the Nativity, Epiphany, the Presentation, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Entry into Jerusalem, Ascension, Pentecost, the Koimesis, or death, of the Mother of God, and the Exaltation of the Cross. However, these Twelve Great Feasts do not always match the scenes which dominate in art after the eleventh century: the Annunciation, the Nativity, Epiphany, the Presentation, the Baptism, the Transfiguration, the Raising of Lazarus, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Crucifixion, the Anastasis or Resurrection, Pentecost, the Ascension. See Demus 1948 and Kitzinger 1988.
6 For images in the church, see Mathews 1988 and Maguire 1998.
7 Russian envoys in Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, pp. 110–11.
8 Ševčenko 1998.
9 In a small-scale survey of the saints in 23 Middle Byzantine churches, 175 different saints appeared. None appeared in all 23 churches. Only 75 appeared more than twice; 36 appeared twice and 64 once. This may just be chance of survival but it may also reflect an enormous diversity in which saints appeared in churches: see James 1994.
10 For liturgical silver, see Boyd 1998.

6 Icons

(pages 248–278)

1 Chatzidakis 1962; Weitzmann 1978; Bacci 2000A, pp. 79–90.
2 Translation by Robin Cormack. St John Damascene, *De imag. Orat. III*, paragraph 16, *Patrologia graeca*, 94, pp. 1337ff. (see also Mango 1972, p. 171); see too *Patrologia graeca*, 50, p. 516 (St John Chrysostom), *Patrologia graeca*, 3, p. 373 (Pseudo-Dionysios); Mango 1972, pp. 137–8, 169–72; Cormack 1997.
3 Grabar 1975; Durand 2004B; New York 2004, nos 152, 153, 154.
4 They are represented in a twelfth-century icon in the Sinai monastery: see Carr 2002, pp. 75–108, figs 1, 2, 6 and Athens 2000, figs 82, 87, 88, 90.
5 Ševčenko 1991; Carr 2000.
6 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 102, no. 82.
7 Vocotopoulos 1995, pp. 58–63, nos 33–40; Sinai Treasures 1990, figs 20–2, 25–7, 31–3; New York 2004, no. 235.
8 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 67, no. 44; for another example, see p. 137, no. 116.
9 Vocotopoulos 1995, p. 47, no. 21.
10 Vocotopoulos 1995, pp. 66, 68, 69, nos 43, 45, 46.
11 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966B; Carr 1995B; Vocotopoulos 1999.
12 Papazotos 1996; Tsigaridas 1988; Avignon 2004.
13 Vocotopoulos 1995, nos 118–22; Thessaloniki 1997C, nos 2.8–11, 2.8–20, pp. 67–73, 82–7 (E. Tsigaridas).
14 Manoussacas 1960–61; Vassilaki 1981; Vassilaki 1994.

7 Byzantium and the West

(pages 274–303)

1 Bacci 2003, p. 237.
2 Paris 2001B; Krause 2004; Klein 2004B.
3 Kalavrezou 1997.
4 Hugh of St Victor, *De arca Noe mystica*, IV (*Patrologia graeca*, 126, col. 686).
5 Stubblebine 1966; Weitzmann 1984A; Belting 1990A; Derbes 1996; Chastel 1999; Pace 2000; Derbes and Neff 2004; Vassilopoulos 2004; Bacci 2007.
6 Panofsky 1927; Belting 1981; Derbes 1996; Wolf 2002, pp. 160–92.
7 Theophilus, *De diversis artibus*, I.1, ed. Dodwell 1961, p. 4.
8 Koehler 1941; Demus 1970; Weitzmann 1966A; Kitzinger 1966; Kitzinger 1970; Wixom 1997; Chastel 1999.
9 Crivello 2007.
10 See especially Venice 1974; Demus 1984 (Venice), and Demus 1950; Kitzinger 1990; Kitzinger 1992–94; Tronzo 1997; Andaloro 1998 (Sicily).
11 Brubaker 2004.
12 Durand 2004A.
13 Cormack 2000A, pp. 196–7.
14 Pace 1982; Calò Mariani 1984; Pace 1986B; Bari 1988; Falla Castelfranchi 1991; Pace 1994; Pace 1997; Calò Mariani 2002; Pace 2003.
15 Živkov 2001.
16 Folda 2005; Jacoby 2004.
17 Dodd 2004; Hélou 2006; Immerzeel 2007.
18 Carr 2005.
19 Kollias 1994; de Vaivre 2004.
20 Chatzidakis 2000.
21 Delinikolas and Vemi 2006.
22 Vassilaki 1982; Papadaki-Oekland 1992; Georgopoulou 2001; Georgopoulou 2004A; Vassilaki 2007.
23 Derbes and Neff 2004, p. 451.
24 Bacci 2006.
25 Soulard 2006.
26 Enlart 1925–26; Buchthal 1957; Folda 1976; Boase 1977; Kühnel 1994; Folda 1995A; Folda 2005.
27 Kühnel 1988.
28 Westphalen 2007.
29 Bacci 2006, p. 216.
30 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1966B; Weitzmann 1972B; Pace 1984; Cormack and Mihalarias 1984; Mouriki 1990; Folda 1992; Pace 1993; Hunt 1998; Zeitler 2000; Georgopoulou 2004B; Folda 2005.

8 Beyond Byzantium

(pages 306–365)

1 Constantine Porphyrogennetos 1967.
2 Mango 1976, pp. 173–4.
3 Karski 1926, pp. 107–8; trans. Cross and Sherbowitz-Wetzor 1953, p. 111.
4 For a discussion of the date of Armenia's conversion, see London 2001, pp. 19–24.
5 Eastmond and Jones 2001, pp. 146–91.
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7 Qaukhchishvili 1955, pp. 282, 290; trans. Thomson 1996, pp. 374–6.
8 Martin-Hisard 1996, pp. 239–48.
9 Dulaurier and Macler 1917, p. 132; Maranci 2003.
10 Choniates 1975, p. 371; trans. Magoulias 1984, p. 205; Fine 1987, pp. 10–17.
11 Kinnamos 1836, pp. 287–8; trans. Brand 1976, p. 280.
12 Eastmond 2003B.
13 Privalova 1980.
14 Compare Redford 1990, pp. 119–35 and Steppan 1995 for arguments about place of origin.
15 Azatian 1987; Rogers 1972, pp. 77–119.
16 The most extensive first-hand account of these encounters between the Franciscans and the Mongols is that of William of Rusbruck 1990; Kouymjian 2006, pp. 303–24.
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18 Pentcheva 2006, pp. 109–43.

9 The Monastery of St Catherine at Sinai

(pages 356–375)

1 Wilkinson 1999, pp. 108–12.
2 Grossmann 1990, pp. 30–4.
3 Ševčenko 2006A; Ševčenko 2006B, pp. 118–20.
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5 Jacoby 2006, pp. 82–9.
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7 Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58.
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12 See Mathews 2006, pp. 39–55 and no. 1, pp. 122–3, no. 3, pp. 126–7.
13 Sotiriou and Sotiriou 1956–58, vol. 1, figs 136–43, 146–51, vol. 2, pp. 121–3, 125–30; Cutler and Spieser 1996, pl. 310; Athens 2000, pls 87–88, 90.
14 Los Angeles 2006, nos 28–9, pp. 190–3 (G. Parpulov).
15 Mouriki 1988; Los Angeles 2006, no. 53, pp. 259–61 (G. Parpulov).
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17 Weitzmann 1963; Weitzmann 1972B; Weitzmann et al. 1982, pp. 201–35.
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19 Drandakis 1990, pp. 126–8, figs 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82.
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Glossary

ROBIN CORMACK

Acheiropoietos
Not made by human hands, and so miraculously produced.

achtiname
Document on which the outline of the hand of Mohammed is imprinted, together with the clauses of protection he granted.

adventus
Official ceremony welcoming the arrival and reception of an emperor or officials into a city. The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem was seen as an *adventus*.

ambo
A prominent raised platform, usually made of marble, in the nave of the church, from which the Gospel was read in the liturgy. It was also used in other parts of the services, not only for recitations of the psalms and prayers but also for special ceremonial, such as the Exaltation of the Cross on 14 September.

Anastasis
'Resurrection': the Easter image of the Orthodox Church, showing Christ breaking down the Gates of Hell and releasing Old Testament figures who believed in him before the Incarnation.

appliqué
A smaller ornament or device applied to another surface, for example a textile.

baldachin *see* **ciborium**

Basileus
Principal title of the Byzantine emperor.

bema
The sanctuary in an Orthodox church.

bezel
Focal point of a ring, distinct from the hoop, often engraved with a design such as a monogram, or inlaid with a stone.

cabochon
A gemstone cut and polished to a rounded shape, without facets.

champlevé
An enamelling technique in which cells are carved into a metal object and filled with vitreous enamel and then fired.

chiton
The main element of Byzantine dress, a tunic worn by men and women in varying lengths and materials.

chlamys
A mantle or short cloak, a main element of court dress.

ciborium
A domed or pyramidal canopy, supported by columns, covering a tomb, the altar or other sacred space.

clavus
A vertical stripe, often purple or gold, decorating a tunic.

cloisonné
An enamelling technique differing from *champlevé*. The cells are created by soldering metal strips to the surface of the object and the vitreous enamel is poured into these before it sets.

colobium
A long, sleeveless garment worn by Christ at the Crucifixion; after iconoclasm he is more usually shown wearing a loincloth.

confraternity
A lay organisation, sometimes to help in the cult of icons.

Deisis
Literally a prayer or petition, the term is often used to refer to the composition of Christ with the Virgin Mary and St John the Baptist.

diakonikon
The space, often a chapel, to the right of the sanctuary that acted as the sacristy.

ekphrasis
A literary description of a work of art.

enkolpion
Reliquary with a sacred image or relic worn at the breast. Sometimes called a necklace, pendant or pectoral.

epigonation
A stiff gold-embroidered piece of cloth that hung from the girdle to the knee.

epitrachelion
An embroidered strip of cloth worn around the neck by priests, the equivalent to the Western stole.

Etimasia
The empty Throne prepared for the Last Judgment.

fibula
A brooch for fastening a tunic at the shoulder.

gesso
Powdered form of calcium carbonate which, mixed with glue, was used as an absorbent primer coat for egg tempera.

globus cruciger
A globe surmounted by a cross, typically part of the emperor's insignia.

himation
A mantle or outer garment.

Hodegetria
One of the commonest icon types in which the Virgin and Child are represented with Mary pointing to the Child. From the period of iconoclasm, it was believed that the first image of this type was painted from the life by St Luke the Evangelist.

iconoclasm
The period from *c.* 730 to 787 and 815 to 843 during which figurative images were banned from churches, and existing works of art were destroyed or concealed.

iconoclast
A supporter of iconoclasm, who denied the holiness of religious images.

iconophile (or iconodoule)
An opponent of iconoclasm, who venerated images.

iconostasis
A high screen with icons developed in Late Byzantium.

indiction
The tax year (1 September to 31 August), which was numbered in cycles of 15, starting from 312.

katholikon
The main church of a monastery, usually dedicated to the patron saint of the foundation.

Koimesis
The 'Falling Asleep' of the Virgin Mary, when her soul was taken up to heaven (festival day 15 August).

lectionary
A liturgical book containing texts used at services, arranged according to the Church calendar.

liturgy
In Byzantium, the Eucharistic rite, often called the Divine Liturgy.

loros
A long, jewelled scarf worn on special occasions by the emperor and by archangels attending Christ.

mandorla
A pointed oval surrounding the figure of Christ or the Virgin, indicative of God's power.

Mandylion
The miraculous image of the face of Christ on a cloth which was legendarily sent to cure King Abgar of Edessa, and which was taken to Constantinople in 944.

maphorion
A long shawl worn over the head and shoulders and typically part of the dress of the Virgin Mary.

martyrium
A special building made to commemorate an event from the life of Christ or the death of a martyr.

Menologion
A collection of saints' lives arranged according to their commemoration in the Church year, which started on 1 September.

minsourion
A large silver plate.

missorium
A large plate as part of table service, or for display.

naos
A church or the nave of a church where the congregation stood.

narthex
The transverse vestibule of a church, sometimes used for baptismal or funerary services, and the place for penitents.

niello
A black metal alloy of sulphide copper silver and lead, used as a decorative inlay, especially on silver.

nimbus/nimbate
A halo worn by Christ, saints and even emperors and their wives. Only Christ has the cross nimbus.

omophorion
A long white scarf worn by a bishop.

opus interrasile
Pierced-work technique in gold.

orans/orant
A position in which a figure is depicted frontally with both arms upraised.

orarion
A narrow white silk stole worn by a deacon while officiating.

paludamentum
A military cloak similar in form to the chlamys, when worn by an emperor fastened on the right shoulder with a circular brooch (fibula).

Panagia
'All-Holy': the usual epithet of the Virgin Mary or Mother of God in Byzantium.

Parousia
The Second Coming of Christ.

patera
A broad shallow dish.

pendilia
Decorative elements composed of ornamented chains or wires suspended from a crown.

phelonion
Outer liturgical garment worn by priests.

Proskynesis
Literally 'prostration'. An act of supplication or reverence, particularly in front of Christ, icons and the emperor.

prothesis
The space to the left of the sanctuary, often a chapel, where the bread and wine were prepared for the liturgy.

pteruges
A kilt of leather or metal strips worn below a cuirass.

pyxis
Box.

repoussé
A metalworking technique in which the design is raised in relief by hammering from behind.

revetment
A covering – in marble if for decorating walls and in gold and silver if for covers – to enhance icons.

rinceau
A decoration often in the form of a vine scroll.

sakkos
An outer liturgical vestment worn by bishops instead of the priest's phelonion, usually heavily embroidered; it is derived from imperial dress.

sgraffito
Literally scratched; two successive layers of contrasting slip are applied to an unfired ceramic, and scratched to produce an outline drawing with the different colours.

slip
An aqueous suspension of a mixture of clays and other minerals such as quartz, feldspar and mica.

staurotheke
A reliquary preserving a fragment of the True Cross of the Crucifixion, reputedly found by St Helena on Golgotha.

sticharion
A long tunic worn by a deacon and the higher clergy.

tablion
A rectangular decorated panel attached to the edge of chlamys.

templon
A screen to separate the sanctuary from the nave, developed after the sixth century and comprising an epistyle supported on columns and panels at floor level.

Tree of Life
Mentioned in the Book of Genesis as the potential source of immortality to Adam and Eve, and used symbolically in Byzantine art.

tyche
A personification of good fortune as protector of a city.

typikon
A monastic typikon contains the charter and rules and regulations of the community; the typikon of St Sophia contained the liturgical rites of the Church.

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Index

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A

Abbasid Caliphate 31, 310
Abu Ghosh 279
Acre 278, 279, 363, 447
Acre, Fall of (1291) 359
Akotantos, Angelos 42, 254, 363
  icon with St Theodore 254, **268**, 440
  icon with the Virgin Kardiotissa and Child 254, **269**, 440
Akra tapeinosis 277
alabaster paten with Christ 115, **136**, 401
Alaçam 379
Alexander II, Tsar 431
Alexander of Tralles 416
Alexander the Great *312*, 378
Alexandria 164, 359, 380, 382
Alexandria, University of 360
Alexios I Komnenos, Emperor 32, 116, 395, 396, 398
Aliotto, Ulisse 444
altar tables 199
Ambrose, St 27
amphora **193**, 421
ampulla with images of the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension 38, **84**, 384–5
ampulla with images of the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension 38, **84**, 384
amulets **93**, 165–6, 387
Anastasios, Emperor 68, 384
Anatolia 311
Andrew, St 112–13, **131**, 197, 399
Andronikos I, Emperor 32
Andronikos II Palaiologos, Emperor 393, 438, 449
Andronikos III Palaiologos, Emperor 393
Andronikos IV Palaiologos, Emperor 453
Ani 309, 310
Anne, St 251
Antioch 164, 359, 380
Antioch Chalice **78**, 382–3
Antoninus Pius, Emperor 47
Aphrodite 153, **156**, 382, 406, 410
Apollo **76**, 382
Apostles **79**, 382, 383
Aputayli, stone khatchkar of **328**, 452
Arabs 27–8, 69, 165, 358
architecture 196–7, 279
Arculf, bishop of Gaul 422
Arethas, St **241**, 433
Ariadne, Empress 68, 384
Arkadios, Emperor 379
Armenia 309, 310, 312, 313, 456
Arsenios, Patriarch 29
Arta, Vlacherna church 252
Artemis 410
Ashot I Bagratuni, King of Armenia 310
Asia Minor 28, 31–2
Asklepios **75**, 382, 397
Assiut treasure 165, 410, 411
asterisk 199
Athanasios 388
Athens 51, 278
Atrani, Church of San Salvatore de Birecto **304–5**, 448
Attica 279
Augustus, Emperor 378
Avars 26, 27, 412

B

Bacchos, St 68, 69, 360, **364**, 388, 460
Bahnasa 419
Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem 446
Balkans 278, 308, 309, 310–12, 314
Basil I, Emperor 309
Basil II, Emperor 30, 31, 113, 115, 309, 310
Basil the Great, St 39, 200, 250
Basil the *proedros* 114
Basilius 68, **74**, 381
basins
  basin made for Sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub *313*, 314
  Mytilene basin 153
Bassus, Junius 49, 418
Bayezid I, Sultan 33
Bellini, Gentile, *Cardinal Bessarion and Two Members of the Scuola della Carità in Prayer with the Bessarion Reliquary* **293**, 444–5
bells, church **205**, 422
Berlin Collar **168**, 409
Berlinghiero 444
Bessarion, Cardinal 42, 276, **293**, 444–5
Bethlehem 279
Blachernai 252
bone
  casket **124**, 396–7
  Duthuit Casket **124**, 153
  figurines **190**, 419–20
Boniface IV, Pope 389
Book of Ceremonies 66–7, 68, 112, 115, 116
book covers **138–9**, 165, 200, 402
  Melisende Psalter covers **299**, 446
  Tbeti Gospels **333**, 454
  Tsqarostavi Gospels **332**, 454
books, in churches 199–201
  see also Gospels; manuscripts; psalters
Borradaile Triptych 114, **134**, 401
bowls 142, 143
  bowl (*trulla*) with Aphrodite **156**, 406
  bowl with bird **146**, 404
  bowl with fish **146**, 404
  bowl with leopard and trainer **354**, 459
  bowl with portrait of a saint 69, **95**, 388–9
  glazed bowl with representation of a dancer **147**, 404
  glazed bowl with a representation of a falconer **298**, 446
  glazed bowl with a representation of a fish **298**, 445–6
  glazed large bowl with a representation of a bird **144**, 402
  glazed small bowl with representation of a double-headed eagle **149**, 405
  glazed small four-lobed bowl with representation of a bird **149**, 403, 404–5
  large bowl **145**, 403
  lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer **355**
  lustre-painted bowl with giraffe **354**, 459
  painted and gilded glass bowl **122**, 396
bracelets
  enamelled 165
  gold **159**, 164, **180–3**, 407, 413–15
  silver **180**, **322–3**, 412–13, 450
Branković, Djuradj 422
brass
  basin *313*
  bucket 153, *154*, 405
  candlestick **354**, 458–9
  doors of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto, Atrani **304–5**, 448
  lamps **244**, 434, 435
  weights **161**, 408
brazier in the form of a domed building **207**, 423
breast-chain 164
breviary of King Levon III of Cilian Armenia (Step'anos Vahkats) **336**, 455
bronze
  bells **205**, 421–2
  handle of a standing censer **235**, 432
  head of Constantine I, the Great **55**, 378
  incense burner **244**, 434
  plaque with St George **235**, 432
  plaque with St Niketas **235**, 432
  processional cross **221**, 427
  seal **159**, 407
  votive hand holding a cross **226**, 429
bucket 153, *154*, 405
buckles **159**, 407
  buckle of Prince Petar of Hum **323**, 451
  gold belt-buckle **178**, 412
Bulgaria 31, 309, 311
Buondelmonti, Cristoforo, *Liber insularum archipelagi* **62–3**, 380

C

Cairo, Church of the Virgin, al-Mu'allaqa 314, **352–3**, 458
cameos
  cameo with Christ Pantokrator **231**, 430
  cameo with warrior horseman **54**, 378
  lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin **228**, 430
candelabra 199
Candia 363
candlesticks 199, **354**, 458–9
capital with angels **298**, 446
Cappadocia 309
caskets **354**, 458
  bone casket **124**, 396–7
  carved box with emperors riding and hunting **125**, 397
  David Casket 112, *112*
  Duthuit Casket **124**, 153
  Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
  Projecta Casket **71**, 152, 153, 380–1, 421
  Veroli Casket **124**, 153, 396, 397
Castellorizo 446
Catherine, St 279, **286–7**, **295**, 358–9, *362*, *362*, 437, 443, 445, 460
Caucasus 309–10
censers **90**, 199, 386–7
  handle of a standing censer **235**, 432
Central Asia, silver **329**, 452–3
ceramics 141–3, 278, 402–5
  bowl with bird **146**, 404
  bowl with fish **146**, 404
  bowl with leopard and trainer **354**, 459
  fish-shaped perfume flask **146**, 403
  fragments of a dish **350–1**, 457–8
  glazed bowl with representation of a dancer **147**, 404
  glazed bowl with a representation of a falconer **298**, 446
  glazed bowl with a representation of a fish **298**, 445–6
  glazed large bowl with a representation of a bird **144**, 402
  glazed small bowl with representation of a double-headed eagle **149**, 405
  glazed small four-lobed bowl with representation of a bird **149**, 403, 404–5
  jug with trefoil mouth **146**, 403
  large bowl **145**, 403
  lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer **355**, 459
  lustre-painted bowl with giraffe **354**, 459
  plate with animal **149**, 403, 404
  plate with a deer and other animals **145**, 403
  plate with lion attacking a deer **145**, 402
  plate with lioness **145**, 403
  plate with siren on a bird **145**, 403
  plate with two lovers in a garden **148**, 404
  tray with representation of the Apostles Peter and Paul flanking a cross **210**, 423
  wall tiles **240–1**, 433–4
chains
  breast-chain 164
  chain ornament and coin **93**, 387–8
  gold **176**, 411
  gold body-chains **172–3**, **177**, 410, 412
  necklaces **170**, 410
chair ornaments **60–1**, 380
chalice veil **236**, 433
chalices 199, **218–19**, 426
  Antioch Chalice **78**, 382–3
  chalice of the Patriarchs **137**, 402
  chalice with four Apostles and the Cross **89**, 386
  Sisinnios Chalice 396
champlevé decoration, ceramics 143
chandeliers 199, **202–3**, 421
Charlemagne, Emperor 29
Chilandar 254
child's tunic with a hood **191**, 420
China 313
Christ
  in church decoration 197–8
  on coins 393
  Crucifixion 37
  entry into Jerusalem 66
  as the Good Shepherd 48–9, 378
Christianity
  in Byzantine art 38–9
  churches 196–201, **202–47**, 421–6
  converts to 66, 309
  early art 45–51, **52–63**
  iconoclasm 28–9, 39, 41, 69–70, 165
  images on coins 393
  symbols 142, 403, 416
Church Fathers 200, 250, 400, 402, 416, 427
churches 196–201, **202–47**, 421–6
  architecture 196–7
  bells **205**, 422
  books 199–201
  decoration 197–8
  icons 198–9
  lighting 199, **202–3**, **244**, 421, 434–5
  liturgical vessels 199
  Mount Sinai 358
  screens 198–9, 252
  symbolism 197–8
  textiles 199
  votive gifts 201
Cilicia, manuscripts 313, **335–7**, **339–41**, **344–5**, 455–7
Cimabue 443
Clementinus 68, **72**, 381
cloisonné enamels
  Beresford Hope Cross **104–5**, 391
  enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the archangels Michael and Gabriel **320–1**, 449–50
  Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
closure panels **214–17**, 425–6
clothing
  child's tunic with a hood **191**, 420
  fragment of the lower part of a dalmatic **122**, 396
Codex Ebnerianus 431, 436
Codex Sinopensis 390
coins **106–7**, **159**, 164, 391–4, 407
Columban, St 384
Combat of David and Goliath (silver plate) *28*
combs **127**, **192**, 398, 420–1
commentary on Genesis with drawing of Christ **303**, 447–8
Constans II, Emperor 416
Constantine the Alan *153*
Constantine the Great, Emperor 112, 114, 378, 410
  coins 393, 408, 411
  conversion to Christianity 66, 310
  foundation of Constantinople 38, 46
  head of **55**, 378
  medallions of 164
Constantine II, Emperor 411
Constantine V, Emperor 29
Constantine VI, Emperor 394
Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos, Emperor 36, 39, 112–14, 116, **126**, 308, 393, 395, 396, 397–8, 400
Constantine VIII, Emperor 310
Constantine IX Monomachos, Emperor 166, 425, 428, 445, 449, 459
Constantine X Doukas, Emperor 399
Constantine XI, Emperor 394
Constantinople 26–7, 380
  Arabs besiege 28, 69
  capture by Ottoman Turks 26
  Chora Monastery Church 278
  as Christian centre 276
  Church of the Blachernae 408, 427
  Church of the Holy Apostles 423
  Church of the Prophet Elijah 309
  Church of St Sophia 37, *37*, 114, 115, 198, 309, 310, 380, 390
  Column of Arkadios 379
  Constantine I establishes 38, 46
  consuls 381
  Great Palace 114, 115, 116, 309
  Hippodrome 66–7, 380, 381
  inauguration as New Rome 26
  interaction with West 278
  Kechariotmene 116
  map of **62–3**, 380
  Monastery of the Hodegon 41, 251–2, 394, 423
  personification of **60–1**, 380, 420
  sack of (1204) 32–3, 41, 166, 250, 311
  walls 26, *27*
Constantios II, Emperor 46, 411
consular diptychs 68, **74**
copper
  amphora **193**, 421
  chandelier **202–3**, 421
  copper alloy plaque with the Hodegetria and saints **205**, 422
  dish with the Ascension of Alexander the Great 312, *312*
  polycandelon **204**, 421–2
  processional cross **221**, 426–7
  reliquary crosses **226**, 428–9
Copts 310, 313, 419, 420, 457
Corinth, ceramics 405
Corippus 67
Councils of the Church 200
  covers *see* book covers
Cretan School 254
Crete 31, 42, 278, 359
  icon painters 254, 363
Crispus 411
crossbow fibula **179**, 412

crosses
Beresford Hope Cross **104–5**, 391
Cross of Adrianople **223**, 428
Cross of the Emperors Romanos II and Basil II 115, *115*
cross-reliquary *116*, *116*
gold cross with nielloed inscription **224**, 428
gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints **175**, 411
pectoral cross **184**, 415
pectoral cross with Four Evangelists **227**, 429–30
pectoral reliquary crosses **103**, **225–6**, 391, 428–9
processional cross with Crucifixion (Giunta Pisano) **288–9**, 443
processional crosses 199, **221–2**, 426–7
reliquary crucifix **213**, 424–5
reliquary of the True Cross **220**, 426
stone khatchkar of Aputaylı **328**, 452
votive hand holding a cross **226**, 429
crucifix, reliquary **213**, 424–5
Crusader artists 253, 362–3
Triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned and scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin *363*
Crusades 32, 41, 42, 143, 250, 276, 278, 311, 395, 396
cups, silver **324–5**, 451
Cyprus 31, 42, 278, 359
ceramics 143, 278, 446
falconry 445
icon painters 363
monasteries 250
Cyprus treasure 152, 153
Cyril, St 309
Cyril of Alexandria 48
Cyrillic alphabet 309
Cyrus, St 48

D
dalmatic, fragment of **122**, 396
Dandolo, Doge Andrea 402
Dandolo, Anna *311*, 312
Daniel 380
Daphne **76**, 382
David, King of Israel **86–7**, 385, 395, 446
David Casket 112, *112*
De Administrando Imperio (*On the Administration of the Empire*) 112, 113, 308
'dead cities' 426
The Death of Anna Dandolo 311, 312
Deceased Woman in the Presence of the Enthroned Virgin and Child (wall painting) *278*
Decius, Emperor 46
Deisis with Archangel Gabriel and St Paul 360, **372–3**, 461
Deisis with St Peter and Archangel Michael 360, **370–1**, 461
della Sega, Andrea 444
Delphi 379
Demetrios (mosaicist) 379
Demetrios, St **267**, 311, 393, 439–40
despotic icons 252
Digenis Akritas 404
Diocletian, Emperor 29
Dionysos 48, 49, 417, 418
diptychs 253
diptych leaf with a Byzantine empress 67, **82**, 384
diptych with Asklepios and Hygieia **75**, 382
Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows (Umbrian artist) **284–5**, 442–3
ivory diptych **83**, 384
ivory diptych leaf with a venatio **73**, 381
leaf of the consular diptych of Basilius 68, **74**, 381
micromosaic diptych with festival scenes **258–9**, 437
dishes
dish with the Ascension of Alexander the Great 312, *312*
fragments of a dish **350–1**, 457–8
Dobri Dol hoard 451
Dodd, Erica Cruikshank 388
Dominicans 277
doors
door panels from the Church of the Virgin, al-Mu'allaqa, Cairo 314, **352–3**, 458
doors of the Church of San Salvatore de Birecto, Atrani **304–5**, 447–8
royal doors with the Annunciation **326**, 451
sanctuary door with Annunciation 360, **374**, 461
Dragutin, Prince **319**, 449
drawings 278
Dubrovnik 451
Duccio 443, 455
Dušan's cup **324**, 451
Duthuit Casket **124**, 153

E
earrings **93**, 165, **186–7**, **327**, 387, 417–18, 452
Egeria 358, 359
egg tempera 250
Egypt 308, 309–10, 358
ceramics **354–5**, 459
manuscripts **349**, 457
religion 47, 48
Elijah, Prophet **272**, 358, 361, 441
embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria 314, **315**, 448–9
embroidered image of St George **316**, 448
Emesus Vase **89**, 386
empress, court of 67
enamels 39
Beresford Hope Cross **104–5**, 391
book covers **138–9**, 165, 402
enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the archangels Michael and Gabriel **320–1**, 449–50
Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
Gospel-book covers **138–9**, 165
icons 250
jewellery 165
pectoral cross with Four Evangelists **227**, 429–30
reliquary *enkolpion* **229**, 430
encaustic technique 250, 389
enkolpion, reliquary **229**, 430
Epidauros 382
epigonation (priest's vestment) 199
Epiphanes (mosaicist) 379
epistyles 252, 277
epistyle fragment with the Transfiguration of Christ **243**, 434
epistyle from the Church of the Koimesis at Skripou **214–15**, 425
iconostasis beam with the Great Feasts and Deisis 360, **368–9**, 461
Epitaphios of Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes **238–9**, 433
epitrachelion (priest's vestment) 199
Eros 382
Esquiline treasure **71**, 152, 420
Ethiopia 308
Euboea 278
Eucharist 200, 201, 383
Eudaimonoioannes, Nicholas, Epitaphios of **238–9**, 433
Eudokia, Empress 394, 398, 399
Eudoxia, Empress 400–1
Eumorphopoulos family 417
Euphemia, St **108**, 394
Europa 397
Eusebios, Bishop of Caesarea 51
Euthymios II, Patriarch of Jerusalem *361*, 362
Eutropius 388–9
Eutychides 380
ewer with biblical scenes 152–3, **160**, 407–8

F
Famagusta
Our Lady of Carmel 279
St George of the Greeks 279
Fatimid dynasty 459
Fayum 250, 389, 419
'festival cycles' 197
fibulae 164, **179**, 412
Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
figurines **190**, 419–20
filigree 166
First Cyprus treasure 387, 406
fish-shaped perfume flask **146**, 403
flabellum 199
Francesco da Pisa, Deisis with St Catherine of Alexandria and St Sylvester **286–7**, 443
Francis, St 443
Franciscans 277, 313, 443, 455–6
Franks 29, 279
frescoes *see* wall paintings
Fulk of Anjou 446
funerary cloth with Othon de Grandson and the Virgin and Christ **296–7**, 445
funerary portraits 250

G
Gabriel, Archangel 384, 437
Gagik-Abas of Kars 309, 310
Gallienus, Emperor 46
Ganymede 397
Ge 408, 409
Genoa 277
George, St **235**, **302**, **316**, 360, **366**, 393, 432, 447, 448–9, 460
Georgia 309, 310, 312, 314, **332–3**, 453, 454
Géza I, King of Hungary 166
gilt-copper plaque with St Theodore **211**, 424
Giorgi the Athonite, St 453
Giotto 443
Giunta Pisano 277, 442, 447
processional cross with Crucifixion **288–9**, 443
Glagolitic alphabet 31, 309
glass bowl, painted and gilded **122**, 396
glazed ceramics 142
gold 164–6
amulet **93**, 387
Berlin Collar **168**, 409
body-chains **172–3**, **177**, 410, 412
bracelets **159**, **180–3**, 406–7, 413–15
buckles **159**, **178**, **323**, 407, 412, 450–1
chains **93**, **176**, 387–8, 411
in churches 201
coins **106–7**, **159**, 391–4, 407
crossbow fibula **179**, 412
earrings **93**, **186–7**, 387, 417–18
filigree 166
gold cross with nielloed inscription **224**, 428
gold medallion of Justinian I 66, **85**, 385
gold pendant with the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension **85**, 385
icons 250
medallion with the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Adoration and the Baptism **92–3**, 387
necklaces **168–71**, **174**, 409–11
pectoral reliquary cross **103**, 391
pendants **167**, **174–5**, **227**, **230**, 409, 410–11, 429, 430
reliquary *enkolpion* **229**, 430
rings **185**, **323**, 415–17, 450
strap-end **178**, 412
Goliath 385
Good Shepherd 38, 48–9, *48*, **54**, 378
Gospels 200
Four Gospels **118**, **247**, **300**, 395, 436, 447
Four Gospels with Christ Blessing **344–5**, 456–7
Four Gospels with Christ, donor and scribe **334**, 454
Four Gospels with a serpent curled around a trunk **337**, 455
Four Gospels with title page of St Matthew's Gospel **347**, 457
Four Gospels with the Virgin and Child and donor and Mary Magdalene **342**, 456
Gospel according to St Matthew **99**, 390
Gospel-book of T'oros the Priest **338**, 455
Gospel lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre and Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene **348**, 457
Gospels with Tsar Ivan Alexander 42, **330**, 453
Gospels with the Passion of Christ **237**, 433
Marshal Oshin's Gospels 313, **340–1**, 455, 456
Sinope Gospels 431
Tbeti Gospels **333**, 454
Tsqarostavi Gospels **332**, 454
Vani Gospels **332**, 453
Gothic architecture 278, 279
Gothic art 278
Goths 26
Grandson, Othon de **296–7**, 445
granulation 166
Great Preslav 309
El Greco 363
Greek art 279
Greek Fire 29
Greek literature 30, 310
Gregory I, Archbishop of Ohrid 438
Gregory the Great, Pope 437
Gregory of Nazianzos 386
Grünewald, Matthias 38
gunmetal weights **161**, 408

H
Hacksilber 152
Hadrian, Emperor 389
Hadrian I, Pope 381
Halberstadt diptych 381
Hamilton Psalter 251–2
handle of a standing censer **235**, 432
Hawara 389
head ornament **327**, 452
Helena, Empress 114
Helena, St 46, 114, 358, 441
Hellenistic art 38, 164–5
Heracles 48, 153, 396
Herakleion 363
Herakleios, Emperor 27, *28*, 164, 385, 388, 407
Herakleios Constantine 407
heretics 196
Hezekiah, King of Judah 395
Holy Grail 382
Homer 385
Hosios Loukas, monastery church of *197*, *198*
Hoxne treasure 164, 410, 412
Hugh of St Victor 277
Huns 26
Hygieia **75**, 382, 397

I
iconoclasm 28–9, 39, 41, 69–70, 165, 199, 250
iconostasis 199, 252
iconostasis beam with the Great Feasts and Deisis 360, **368–9**, 461
icons 39, 51, 249–54, 276–7, 436–41
Crusader workshops 253
displaying 252–3
epistyles 252, 277
gilded-silver revetments 251
icons of the Virgin 251–2
influence on Western art 279
materials 201, 250–1
painting techniques 250
processions 252
role of 198
screens 199
signed 42–3
styles 253–4
Christ *251*
Christ Psychosostes 252
Deisis with Archangel Gabriel and St Paul 360, **372–3**, 461
Deisis with St Catherine of Alexandria and St Sylvester (Francesco da Pisa) **286–7**, 443
Deisis with St Peter and Archangel Michael 360, **370–1**, 461
Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows (Umbrian artist) **284–5**, 442–3
double-sided icon of Christ and the Crucifixion 252
double-sided icon of the Crucifixion and the Virgin Hodegetria 252, 253
double-sided icon of the Virgin and the Annunciation 252
embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria 314, **315**, 448
icon of the Archangel Michael **117**, 395
icon of Christ Pantokrator **271**, 441
icon of the Heavenly Ladder of St John Klimakos 360, **375**, 462
icon of the Prophet Moses before the Burning Bush and receiving the Tablets of the Law 360, 361–2, **367**, 460–1
icon of St George and scenes of his life and miracles 360, **366**, 460
icon of St John the Theologian **270**, 440
icon with the Anastasis **266**, 439
icon with the Annunciation and Saints **234**, 431–2
icon with the Baptism of Christ **266**, 439
icon with Christ **265**, 438
icon with Christ with SS Sergios and Bacchos 360, **364**, 460
icon with the Doubting of Thomas **266**, 439
icon with the Koimesis **135**, 401
icon with the Koimesis of the Virgin **273**, 441
icon with St Demetrios (Moravian artist) **267**, 439–40
icon with St Theodore (Akotantos) 254, **268**, 440
icon with the Triumph of Orthodoxy **109**, 394
icons with the Virgin and Child **97**, **128**, **292**, 360, **365**, 389, 398, 444, 460
icon with the Virgin and Child, Church Feasts and Saints **291**, 444
icon with the Virgin Blachernitissa, Prophet Moses and Patriarch Euthymios II of Jerusalem (Petros) *361*
icon with the Virgin Kardiotissa and Child (Akotantos) 254, **269**, 440
icon with the Virgin Psychosostria **265**, 438–9
lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin **228**, 430
Madonna di sotto gli organi 277, *277*
micromosaic diptych with festival scenes **258–9**, 437
micromosaic icon with St Theodore **255**, 436
micromosaic with Christ Pantokrator **256**, 436
micromosaic with the Man of Sorrows **260–1**, 437
micromosaic with the Transfiguration **257**, 436–7
The Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae *251*, 253
Monastery of St Catherine, Mount Sinai 358, 360–3, **364–75**
pair of icons with the Annunciation **262–3**, 437–8
The Prophet Elijah **272**, 441
St George on Horseback 279, *279*
St John the Theologian *254*
triptych with Virgin and Child enthroned with angels and saints **290**, 443
triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned and scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin *363*
two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Annunciation **267**, 439
two-sided icon with the Virgin Hodegetria and the Man of Sorrows 41, *252*, **282–3**, 442
two-sided icon with the Virgin Psychosostria and the Annunciation **264**, 438
Virgin Blachernitissa *252*
Virgin Hodegetria 251–2
Virgin Hodegetria, the 'Arakiotissa' *252*
Virgin Psychosostria *252*
Imago pietatis, *Vir dolorum* 277
incense burner **244**, 434
Innocent IV, Pope 276
Ioane Mtbevari, Bishop of Tbeti 454
Ioannis 361
Iovane (scribe) 453
Iran *see* Persia
Irene, Empress 29, 394
Irene Doukaina, Empress 116
Isaac II, Emperor 393
Isis (panel painting) *51*
Islam *see* Muslims
Italy 277, 278
Ivan III, Grand Prince 448
Ivan Alexander, Tsar of Bulgaria **330–1**, 453
Ivan Asen, Tsar of Bulgaria 311
ivory 39
carved box with emperors riding and hunting **125**, 397
casket **354**, 458
combs **127**, **192**, 398, 420–1
David Casket 112, *112*
diptych leaf with a Byzantine empress 67, **82**, 384
diptych with Asklepios and Hygieia **75**, 382
diptych with Clementinus 68, **72**, 381
'Harbaville' triptych with Deisis and Saints **133**, 400–1
icon with Virgin and Child **128**, 398
ivory diptych **83**, 384
ivory diptych leaf with a venatio **73**, 381
ivory panel with St John the Theologian and St Paul 112, **131**, 399–400
ivory panel with SS. Andrew and Peter 112–13, **131**, 399
ivory panel with the Theotokos Hodegetria 31, **129**, 398–9
ivory triptych with Crucifixion and Saints 'The Borradaile Triptych) *114*, **134**, 401
ivory with Adoration of the Magi 67–8, **81**, 383
ivory with the Annunciation 68, **81**, 383–4
ivory with Archangel 66–7, **80**, 383
ivory with Christ Pantokrator **130**, 399
ivory with Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos crowned by Christ 114, **126**, 397–8
Lampadii ivory 381
leaf of the consular diptych of Basilius 68, **74**, 381
Melisende Psalter covers **299**, 446
plaque with Apollo and Daphne **76**, 382
plaque with Nereid with fruit-filled basket **77**, 382
triptych with Crucifixion and saints 114
triptych with Deisis and saints 113–14, *113*, **132**, 400
Veroli Casket **124**, 153, 397
votive plaque with Christ blessing Emperor Otto II and Empress Theophano **127**, 398
Izgirh treasure 413

J
Jaffa 359
James, St 198, 253–4, 386
James Kokkinobaphos 395
homilies on the Virgin Mary **206**, 422–3
Jeremias 461
Jerusalem 27, 47, 66, *66*, 311
Jerusalem, kingdom of 359, 447
jewellery 163–6, **167–87**, 409–18
bracelets **159**, 164, 165, **180–3**, **322–3**, 406–7, 412–15, 450
earrings **93**, 165, **186–7**, **327**, 387, 417–18, 452
enamel 165
fibulae 164
filigree 166
head ornament **327**, 452
necklaces 164, **168–71**, **174**, 409–11
rings **185**, **323**, 415–17, 450–1
Job, Book of 201
John, St 48
John II Komnenos, Emperor 32, 395
John V Palaiologos, Emperor 393, 453
John VI Kantakouzenos, Emperor 453
John VIII Palaiologos, Emperor 33, 196
John of Conti, archbishop of Nicosia 445
John of Damascus, St 250
Sacra Parallela 34, 39
John the Baptist, St 250–1, **320–1**, 386, 387, 438–9, 449–50
John the Evangelist, St 386
John the Grammarian, Patriarch 390
John the Theologian, St 112, **131**, 251, *254*, **270**, 399–400, 440, 441
John Chrysostom, St 27, 447
John Klimakos, St 253, 360, **375**, 462
John Tzimiskes, Emperor 31, 309
Jonah 49, 424
Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree 38, **53**, 378
Jonah Cast Up 38, **52**, 378
Joshua 379, 396
Joshua Rotulus 379
Judaism 46
jug with trefoil mouth **146**, 403
Jupiter Dolichenus 429
Jupiter Keraunios 429
Justin II, Emperor 67, 388
Justinian I, Emperor *24*, 66, 309, 358, 360, 379, 383, 385, 393, 460
Justinian II, Emperor 393

K
Kantakouzenos, Manuel 417
Kars 309, 310
Kastoria 253
Kekaumenos 112, 115, 116
Keran, Queen of Cilicia 456
khatchkar of Aputaylı **328**, 452
Khludov Psalter *69*, 70, 390
Khusro II, King of Persia 27
Kiev 250, 309, 360
Cathedral of St Michael of the Golden Domes 309, 419
St Sophia 445
Konstandin (scribe) 456
Konya **354**, 459
Koresis, Michael 453
Kosovo 450
Kratego treasure 387, 406, 411, 413

L
Lagurka, Church of SS. Kvirike and Ivlita *310*
Lakonia 403, 404
Lambousa treasures 165, 385, 387, 388, 409, 413
Lampadii ivory 381
lamps 199, **244**, 434–5
Lampsacus treasure 421
Laocoön 378
lapis-lazuli icon with Christ and the Virgin **228**, 430
Lapithos 446
Latakia 359
Lazarus **242**, 434
Lebanon 278
lectionaries 200
Gospel lectionary with the Holy Women at the Sepulchre and Christ's Appearance to Mary Magdalene **348**, 457
lectionary of Hetum II *312*
lectionary with cruciform text **120–1**, 395–6
lectionary with Last Supper **233**, 431
Leo, protospatharios 40
Leo I, Emperor 384
Leo II, King of Cilicia 456
Leo III, Emperor 28–9, 69, 70, 250
Leo III, Pope 389
Leo V, Emperor 29, 70
Leo VI, Emperor 115, 393, 396, 398
Leo Phocas 425
Leo Tornikios 425
Levant 276, 308
Levon III, King of Armenia 455
Life of St Pantaleon 250
lighting, churches 199, **202–3**, **244**, 421, 434–5
literature 30–1
liturgy 197, 199, 200
Lives of saints with St Euphemia **108**, 394
Lombardic graves 412
Luke, St 41, 250, 277, **343**, 394, 423, 438, 456
lustre-painted bowl with cup-bearer **355**, 459
lustre-painted bowl with giraffe **354**, 459

M
Macedonia 253
Macedonian dynasty 165
'Macedonian Renaissance' 30
Madonna della Misericordia 313, **339**, 455–6
Madonna di sotto gli organi 277, *277*
Madrid Skylitzes 29
Maenad, from Saraçhane *47*
Magdalen College Musterbuch 278
Makarios, St **211**, *314*, 424
al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, Sultan *313*, 314
Mamluks 314
Man of Sorrows 277
maniera greca paintings 277
Manuel I Komnenos, Emperor 32, 311, 396
Manuel II Palaiologos, Emperor 416
manuscripts 39, 278
Breviary of King Levon III of Cilian Armenia (Step'anos Vahkatsi) **336**, 455
Cilician 313, **344–5**, 456–7
collected spiritual writings of St John and the Virgin Mary with Christ **349**, 457
commentary on Genesis with drawing of Christ **303**, 447–8
homilies on the Virgin Mary (James Kokkinobaphos) **206**, 422–3
Khludov Psalter *69*, 70
leaf from a model book showing Christ and Zacchaeus, and St Theodore and St George **302**, 447
Liber insularum archipelagi (Buondelmonti) **62–3**, 380
Lives of saints with St Euphemia **108**, 394
manuscript with donor before the Madonna della Misericordia 313, **339**, 455–6
A Miracle of St Menas **346**, 457
Missal with Crucifixion **301**, 447
New Testament **232**, 431
portrait of Gagik-Abas of Kars, with his wife and daughter *309*, 310
see also Gospels; lectionaries; psalters
maps, Constantinople **62–3**, 380
marble
capital with angels **298**, 446
closure panels **214–17**, 425–6
Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree **53**, 378
Jonah Cast Up **52**, 378
reliquary sarcophagus **212**, 424
table support with figure of the Good Shepherd **54**, 378
Maresa, Bernardo 362
Maria Komnene 116
Markov monastery 252
Markova Varoš hoard 166
Marshal Oshin's Gospels 313, **340–1**, 455, 456
Martinus de Vilanova, Altar panel with St Catherine 362, *362*
Mary, Virgin *see* Virgin Mary
Mathews, Thomas F. 360
Matsulevich, Leonid 388
Maurice Tiberius, Emperor 27, 387
Maximian, Emperor 68
Measles technique, ceramics 143, 403
Mecca 358
medallions 164
gold medallion of Justinian I 66, **85**, 385
medallion with the Virgin and Child, the Nativity, the Adoration and the Baptism **92**, 387
roundel with the Mother of God **245**, 435
Mediterranean 277, 278, 308
Megalopoli 379
Melisende, Queen of Jerusalem 446
Melisende Psalter covers **299**, 446
Melissenos, Gregory 196
Melkisedek 310
Menander 66
Menas, St 69, **346**, 457
Mercatellis, Raphael de 380
Mersine treasure 165, 412, 413
Mesopotamia 309
metalwork *see* brass; bronze; gold; silver; steel
Metaphrastes, Symeon 394
Methodios, Bishop of Heraklia 396
Methodios, Patriarch 390, 394
Methodios, St 309
Metohija 450
Michael, Archangel **117**, 250, 393, 394, 395, 425
Michael III, Emperor 250, 251, 394
Michael VII Doukas, Emperor 166
Michael VIII Palaiologos, Emperor 33, 253, 393
Michael Keroularios, Patriarch 29
Michigan, University of 360
micromosaic icons 201, 251, **255–61**, 436–7
miniature with St Luke and Theophilos **343**, 456
A Miracle of St Menas **346**, 457
'Mirrors of Princes' 116
Missal with Crucifixion **301**, 447
Mohammed, Prophet 358
Moldavian textiles **316**, 448
monasteries 27
churches 196
icons 250
psalters 200–1
Monastery of St Catherine *see* Mount Sinai
Monastery of St John Stoudios 390
Mongols 313
Montefeltro, Federico da, Duke of Urbino 395
Moravian artist, icon with St Demetrios **267**, 439–40
mosaics
in churches 197
Marnad, from Saraçhane *47*
micromosaic icons 201, 251, **255–61**, 436–7
mosaic panel of St Stephen **317**, 449
mosaic pavement with personifications of the months 58, 379
mosaic with head of Christ **246**, 435
mural mosaic 49–50, *50*
portrait of Justinian I *24*
Ravenna 164, *165*
Termae Constantinianae 46
wall mosaic with head of an angel **294**, 445
Moschophoros (calf-bearer) 378
Moscow 314
Moses, Prophet 358, 361–2, **367**, 460–1
Mount Athos 199, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 434
Monastery of Hilandar 311
Monastery of Iviron 310
Monastery of Vatopedi 251, 252, 254
Mount Horeb 358
Mount Papikion 405
Mount Penteli 279
Mount Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine 200, 250, 252, 253, 279, 357–63, 359, **364–75**
mummy panel with the portrait of a woman **96**, 250, 389
Muslims 27–8, 310, 312, 313–14, 358
Mytilene basin 153
Mytilene treasure 152, 165, 418

N
Near East 309–10
necklaces 164, **168–71**, **174**, 409–11
Nereids **77**, 382, 421
Nestorians 38, 453
New Testament 49, 153, 201, **232**, 431
Nicaea 33
Nicholas, St **240**, 251, 422, 433–4
Nicholas Mystikos, Patriarch 29
nielllo 166, 412–13, 416
Nike 393
Nikephoros, Patriarch 28
Nikephoros III Botaniates, Emperor 396, 435
Nikephoros Phokas 31
Niketas, St **235**, 432
Nitria, manuscripts **347**, 457
Normandy 358
Normans 32, 278, 438
North Africa 308
Novgorod 314
Nubia 308
manuscripts **346**, 457

O
Ohrid 253
oil lamps 199, **244**, 434–5
Old Testament 49, 153, 201, 358
On the Administration of the Empire 112, 113, 308
Opizari, Beka 454
opus interrasile, goldwork 164, 409, 410, 414–15, 418
Orchomenos 40
Orontes, River 380
Orsini, Cardinal Giordano 380
Orsini del Balzo, Raimondello 437
Orthodox Church 31, 41, 196–201, 250
Oshin, Marshal 313, 456
Osiris 418
Osman 33
Otto II, Emperor **127**, 398
Ottoman Turks 26, 33, 42

P
paintings
Byzantine influences on West 277–8
encaustic technique 250, 389
Gospel-books 200
maniera greca 277
panel paintings 51, *51*
wall paintings 252, 253
Western influences 279
The Death of Anna Dandolo 311, 312
Deceased Woman in the Presence of the Enthroned Virgin and Child 278
epistyle fragment with the Transfiguration of Christ **243**, 434
fresco copy from the King's Church, Studenica monastery, with patrons and saints **318**, 449
fresco copy from Sopoćani monastery with King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin, the Virgin and Child **319**, 449
manuscript with St Luke and Theophilos **343**, 456
mummy panel with the portrait of a woman **96**, 250, 389
The Raising of Lazarus **242**, 434
wall painting with St Catherine **295**, 445
see also icons; manuscripts
Palaiologos family 33, 41
Palestine 279, 363
panels, closure **214–17**, 425–6
see also icons
Pantaleon, St 448
Paolo Veneziano 444
Paphos 404, 446
Paris Psalter 114, *114*, 115, 116
Parpulov, Georgi 361–2
Partagh (scribe) 457
patens 199
alabaster paten with Christ 115, **136**, 401
paten with the Communion of the Apostles **79**, 383
paten with scenes of the Passion of Christ 38, **329**, 452–3
Riha paten 201
Patmos 250
Patmos liturgical roll 200
Paul, St 112, **131**, **210**, 360, **372–3**, 386, 399–400, 423, 461
Paul the Silentiary 66
pearls 410
pectoral cross **184**, 415
pectoral cross with Four Evangelists **227**, 429–30
Nestorians 38, 453
pectoral reliquary crosses **103**, **225**, **226**, 391, 428–9
Pelagios 386
pendants 164
gold **167**, 408–9
gold coin-set pendant **175**, 411
gold necklace with pendant **174**, 410–11
gold pendant cross with Christ, the Virgin, St John and two saints **175**, 411
gold pendant with the Adoration of the Magi and the Ascension **85**, 385
pendant with Christ Pantokrator **230**, 431
Pera, Arap Camii 279
perfume brazier in the form of a domed building **207**, 423
perfume flask, fish-shaped **146**, 403
Persia (Iran) 26, 27–8, 308, 310
Persian Wars 165
Petar, Prince of Hum **323**, 451
Peter, St **56**, 112–13, **131**, **210**, 360, **370–1**, 379, 386, 399, 423, 461
Peter Asen, Tsar of Bulgaria 311
Petros (icon painter) 361, 362
icon with the Virgin Blachernitissa, Prophet Moses and Patriarch Euthymios II of Jerusalem *361*, 362
Phanourios, St 254, 440
Philagathos, John 398
Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy 380
Philoxenus diptych 381
Phokas, Emperor 27, 388, 389, 393
Photios, Patriarch 28, 29, 43, 390
Piacenza pilgrim 359
pierced-work decoration, goldwork 164, 409, 410, 413, 414–15
pilgrims 201, 276, 358, 359
pilgrim's tokens 66, *66*
Pisa 277, 443, 444
Pisanello, portrait medal of John VIII 33
plaques
copper alloy plaque with the Hodegetria and saints **205**, 422
enamel plaques with St John the Baptist and the archangels Michael and Gabriel **320–1**, 449
gilt-copper plaque with St Theodore **211**, 423–4
plaque with Apollo and Daphne **76**, 382
plaque with Nereid with fruit-filled basket **77**, 382

plaque with St George **235**, 432
plaque with St Niketas **235**, 432
votive plaque with Christ blessing Emperor Otto II and Empress Theophano **127**, 398
plates 142, 143, *143*
Combat of David and Goliath *28*
Cyprus treasure 153
Mytilene treasure 153
plate with animal **149**, 403, 404
plate with a deer and other animals **145**, 403
plate with lion attacking a deer **145**, 402
plate with lioness **145**, 403
plate with mounted hunter *153*
plate with siren on a bird **145**, 403
plate with two lovers in a garden **148**, 404
silver plates 152, **156–7**, 406
silver plate with cross **94**, 388
silver plate with cruciform monogram **94**, 388
silver plate with goatherd, two goats and a dog **88**, 386
silver plates with scenes from the life of David **86–7**, 153
polycandelon **204**, 421–2
polychrome decoration, ceramics 142–3, 404–5
polyptychs, icons 253
Pompeii 389
Portrait of Gagik-Abas of Kars, with his wife and daughter *309*
pottery *see* ceramics
priests, vestments 199
Princeton, University of 360
Probianus, Rufius 381
processional crosses 199, **221–2**, 426–7
processional cross with Crucifixion (Giunta Pisano) **288–9**, 443
processions, of icons 252
Projecta Casket **71**, 152, 153, 380–1, 421
prosphynetaria (icon stand) 252
psalters **119**, 200–1, 395
Hamilton Psalter 251–2
Melisende Psalter covers **299**, 446
Paris Psalter 114, *114*, 115, 116
psalter of Basil II *30*
psalter with Christ praying and with the Crucifixion and an iconoclast 70, **100**, 390
psalter with Crucifixion, iconoclasts and simoniac priests **101**, 390
psalter with the veneration of an icon of the Virgin Mary Hodegetria **208–9**, 423
psalter with Virgin and Child (Sargis Pidsak) **335**, 454
Theodore Psalter 453
Psellos, Michael 31, 39
Pukaralisdze, Ione 454
'Punkt-Komma' decoration 412
pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels **91**, 387

R
The Raising of Lazarus **242**, 434
Ravenna 164, *165*, 435–6
Reformation 41
relics 201, 358–9
relief with besieged city **57**, 379
reliquaries 276
Beresford Hope Cross **104–5**, 391
Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
fragment of a reliquary **327**, 451–2
pectoral reliquary crosses **103**, **225–6**, 391, 428–9
reliquaries of the True Cross **220**, 276, **280–1**, 415, 426, 428, 430, 441–2
reliquary crucifix **213**, 424–5
reliquary *enkolpion* **229**, 430
reliquary sarcophagus **212**, 424
renovation 29–31
resist-dyed panel showing the Nativity **188**, 419
Rhodes 278, 279
Riha paten 201
rings **185**, **323**, 415–17, 450–1
Ritzos, Andreas 363
Ritzos, Nikolaos 441
rock crystal
pendant with Christ Pantokrator **230**, 431
The Virgin's Grotto 115, **123**, 396
Rodop's bell **205**, 422
Roman Empire 309
Byzantium as continuation of 26
Christianity in 46, 66
decline of 27
Hellenistic influences 164
jewellery 164
panel paintings 51
Romanesque architecture 278
Romanos I, Emperor 114
Romanos II, Emperor 114, 115, 116, 308, 398, 399, 400–1
Romanos IV, Emperor 394, 398, 400
Rome 380
catacombs 46, 49
as Christian centre 276
Column of Marcus Aurelius 379
Column of Trajan 379
Pantheon 389
personification of 420
Santa Maria ad Martyres-Pantheon 250
Santa Pudenziana 49–50, *50*
Rouen 358
roundel with the Mother of God **245**, 435
royal doors with the Annunciation **326**, 451
Rublev, Andrei 314
Rukn ad-Daula abu Sulayman Da'ud 312, *312*
Russia 308, 309, 314, **315**, 448

S
Sabazios 429
St Catherine, Monastery of *see* Mount Sinai
St George on Horseback 279, *279*
saints
in church decoration 197, 198, 199
portraits of 68, 69–70
relics 201, 358–9
Salome 383
saltzaria 142, *143*
Salus, cult of 393
Samuel 385
sanctuary door with Annunciation 360, **374**, 461
sandals, child's **191**, 420
Saracens 276
sarcophagi 49
fragment of a sarcophagus front with St Peter **56**, 379
reliquary sarcophagus **212**, 424
Sargis Pidsak 454
psalter with Virgin and Child **335**, 454
Saul 385
Sava, St 430
screens 198–9, 252
scripts 31, 39, 309
scrolls 200
sculpture
capital with angels **298**, 446
head of Constantine I, the Great **55**, 378
Jonah beneath the Gourd Tree 38, **53**, 378
Jonah Cast Up 38, **52**, 378
relief with besieged city **57**, 379
Scuola della Carità **293**, 444
seal **159**, 407
Sebastian, St 448
Seljuk Turks 31–2, 311, 312, 313
Serbia 311, 449
jewellery **322–3**, **327**, 449–50, 451–2
silver **324–5**, 450, 451
woodwork **326–7**, 451
Sergios, St 68, 69, 360, **364**, 388, 460
Setaisdze, Giorgi 454
sgraffito decoration, ceramics 143
shawls
fragment of a shawl **189**, 419
shawl with vase and vine with figures **188**, 418–9
Sicily 278
ivory **354**, 458
Silk Road 313
silk with the Annunciation **98**, 389
silver
book covers **138–9**, 165, 402
bowl with portrait of a saint 69, **95**, 388–9
bracelets **180–3**, **323**, 412–13, 450
caches 152
censer **90**, 386–7
chalices **78**, **89**, **218–19**, 382–3, 386, 426
Cross of Adrianople **223**, 427–8
Cross of the Emperors Romanos II and Basil II 115, *115*
cups **324**, 451
decoration 153
earrings **327**, 452
Emesus Vase **89**, 386
gilded-silver revetments on icons 251
Hacksilber 152
icon with the Annunciation and Saints **234**, 431–2
niello 166, 416
patens 38, **79**, **329**, 383, 452–3
pectoral reliquary cross **225**, 428
perfume brazier in the form of a domed building **207**, 423
plates **86–8**, **94**, 153, *153*, **156–7**, 385, 386, 388, 406
processional cross **222**, 427
Projecta Casket **71**, 152, 153, 380–1, 421
reliquary of the True Cross **220**, 426
rings **323**, 450–1
silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora **161**, 408
silver pyxis with Christ, the Virgin and Archangels **91**, 387
spoons 153, **155**, **158**, 405, 406
Simeon (scribe) 453
Simonida, Queen of Serbia 449
Sinai *see* Mount Sinai
Sinope Gospels 431
Sion treasure 421
Sisinnios Chalice 396
situla (bucket) *152*, 153
Skripou
Church of the Koimesis 199, **214–15**, 425
Church of Panagia 40, *40*
solidi **159**, 407
Slavs 26, 27, 28
Sopočani 254, *311*, 312
Sotiriou, George and Maria 360
Spileotes, Helias 278
spoons 153, **158**, 406
spoon with flat handle **155**, 405–6
spoon with inscription **155**, 405
two spoons decorated with a panther and a lion **155**, 406
staurotheke 276
steatite carvings **135**, 401
steel, sword **155**, 406
Stefan Dušan, Tsar 451
Stefan Nemanja 311
Stefan Uroš I, King of Serbia 311, 312, **319**, 449, 450
Stefan Uroš II Milutin, King of Serbia 449
Stephanos (architect) 358
Stephanos (icon painter) 361–2, 460–1
Stephen, St 251, **317**, 449
Stephen of Novgorod 432
Stephen the Great, Prince 448
Stilicho, Consul 417
strap-end, gold **178**, 412
Studenica 311
King's Church **318**, 449
Susanna and the Elders (tomb fresco) 49, **58–9**, 380
sword **155**, 406
Sylvester, St **286–7**, 443
Symeon, Abbot of Sinai 359
Symmachus, Q. Aurelius 381
Syria 310, 313
ceramics **350–1**, 457–8
icons 360, 363
manuscripts **348**, 457

T
table support with figure of the Good Shepherd **54**, 378
tables, altar 199
Talbot-Rice, David 36
Tamar, Queen of Georgia 453–4
Tamerlane 33
Tao-Klarjeti 309
tapestry shawl with vase and vine with figures **188**, 418–9
Tarasios, Patriarch 28
Tbeti Gospels **333**, 454
Telesphoros 382
tempera 250
templon screens 198–9, 252
Termae Constantinianae 46
textiles
chalice veil **236**, 433
child's tunic with a hood **191**, 420
in churches 199
embroidered icon with the miracle of the Hodegetria 314, **315**, 448
embroidered image of St George **316**, 448–9
Epitaphios of Nicholas Eudaimonoioannes **238–9**, 433
fragment of the lower part of a dalmatic **122**, 396
fragment of a shawl **189**, 419
fragments of the robe of Tsar Ivan Alexander **331**, 453
funerary cloth with Othon de Grandson and the Virgin and Christ **296–7**, 445
resist-dyed panel showing the Nativity **188**, 419
silk with the Annunciation **98**, 389
tapestry shawl with vase and vine with figures **188**, 418–9
textile hanging with St Makarios and woman in prayer **211**, 424
Thalassa 153
Thebes 379
Church of St Gregory 426
Thekla 394
Theodolinda, Queen 384
Theodora, Empress 164, 166, 250, 251, 358, 384, 393, 394, 408, 410, 417
Theodora, Queen of Serbia, ring of **323**, 450
Theodore, St **211**, 251, **302**, 423–4, 447
Theodore the Studite, Abbot 390
Theodore Psalter 390, 453
Theodore Stratelates, St 254, **255**, 436
Theodore Tiro, St 198, 254, **268**, 439–40
Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths 381
Theodosia, St 394
Theodosios 387
Theodosios I, Emperor 26
obelisk of 66, *67*
Theophanes the Greek (Feofan Grek) 314
St Makarios 314
Theophano, Empress **127**, 398
Theophilos, Emperor 394
Theophilus, *Treatise on Several Arts* 277
Thessaloniki 49, 253, 254, 311, 393, 405
Thessaly 403, 404
Thomas, St **266**, 439
Tiberius II, Emperor 388, 393, 411
tiles **240–1**, 433–4
Timotesubani 312
Titus, Emperor 47
tomb with wall paintings, including
Susannah and the Elders **58–9**, 380
Torcello, Santa Maria Assunta 445
T'oros Roslin 313
Gospel-book of T'oros the Priest **338**, 455
Trajan, Emperor 378
tray with representation of the Apostles Peter and Paul flanking a cross **210**, 423–4
Trdat 310
Trebizond 312
'Trees Sarcophagus' *49*
triptychs 253
'Harbaville' triptych with Deisis and Saints **133**, 400–1
triptych with Crucifixion and saints *114*
triptych with Deisis and saints 113–14, *113*, **132**, 400
triptych with Virgin and Child enthroned with angels and saints **290**, 443–4
triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned and scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin *363*
Tritons 421
Triumph of Orthodoxy 39, **109**, 250, 251, 394
True Cross 27, 116, 201, 384
Fieschi-Morgan staurotheke **102**, 390–1
reliquaries **220**, 276, **280–1**, 415, 426, 428, 430, 441–2
trulla **156**, 406
Tsqarostavi Gospels **332**, 454
Turcii, Proiecta 380
Turcius Secundus 380
Turcomans 31–2, 311
Turnovo 453
Tutun 419

U
Umbrian artist, Diptych with the Virgin and Child and the Man of Sorrows **284–5**, 442–3
Uspenskij, Porphyrij 250, 360

V
Vahkatsi, Step'anos, Breviary of King Levon III of Cilian Armenia **336**, 455
Valerian, Emperor 46
Vani Gospels **332**, 453–4
Varangians 415
Vasak, Baron 455
vases, ceramic 143
Vaspurakan 309
veil, chalice **236**, 433
Veliko Trnovo 311
Venice 32, 277, 278, 311, 359, 444
Basilica of San Marco 41, *42*, 276, 402
Doge's Palace 46
Treasury of San Marco 250
Venus 153, 380, 381, 412
Veroia 253
Veroli Casket 39–40, **124**, 153, 396, 397
vessels, liturgical 199
vestments 199
Vikings 31
Virgin Mary 38–9
icons of 251–2
homilies on the Virgin Mary (James Kokkinobaphos) **206**, 422–3
ivories 67–8, **81**, 383–4
Virgin Blachernitissa 408, 426, 427
Virgin Hodegetria 41, **129**, **205**, **208–9**, 314, **315**, 394, 422, 423, 438, 439, 448
Virgin Pammakaristos 250–1
The Virgin's Grotto 115, **123**, 396
vita icons 460
Voloshanka, Grand Princess Helena 448
'volume style', icons 254
votive hand holding a cross **226**, 429
votive offerings 50–1, 201
votive plaque with Christ blessing Emperor Otto II and Empress Theophano **127**, 398

W
wall mosaic with head of an angel **294**, 445
wall paintings *142*, 253
Deceased Woman in the Presence of the Enthroned Virgin and Child 278
fresco copy from the King's Church, Studenica monastery, with patrons and saints **318**, 449
fresco copy from Sopočani monastery with King Stefan Uroš I and Prince Dragutin, the Virgin and Child **319**, 449
Marriage at Cana *166*
St Makarios (Theophanes the Greek) *314*
tomb with wall paintings, including
Susannah and the Elders **58–9**, 380
wall painting with St Catherine **295**, 445
wall tiles **240–1**, 433–4
weights
one-pound commodity weight with imperial figures **161**, 408
one-pound commodity weight with two emperors **161**, 408
silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora **161**, 408
Weitzmann, Kurt 360, 362–3
West, Byzantium and 276–9, **280–305**, 448–59
woodwork
door panels from the Church of the Virgin, al-Mu'allaqa, Cairo 314, **352–3**, 458
relief with besieged city **57**, 379

Y
Yovhannēs (scribe) 455, 456

Z
Zeno, Emperor 384
Zeus 382
Zoë, Empress 166, 408, 445